

Sharing our Joy in Tumaco



This article is part of a continuous series on projects supported by our congregation's "sharing" in 2006. Each year, the congregation shares a portion of its resources with communities, movements, and organisations involved in serving and empowering those in need — marginalised persons, refugees, the sick, the disabled and survivors of natural and human-made disasters. This solidarity is a challenge to the congregation to learn and act with others.

Improving Children's Health and Nutrition in Tumaco, Colombia

The focus of this initiative is to accompany pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and children up to 6 years of age, in order to reduce mortality and malnutrition, through basic health interventions, nutrition, essential education and citizenship. All of the beneficiaries of the project are internally displaced and the poorest of the region. Our project partner is the Children and Youth Section of the Colombian Episcopal Conference of the Roman Catholic Church. The grant to be provided is 5,000 CHF.

The project will be implemented in the neighborhoods of La Ciudadela,

Union Victoria, El Obrero and El Porvernir in the city of Tumaco in the state of Nariño, on the Pacific coast of Colombia. These neighborhoods face extreme poverty and malnutrition. Families receive (bad) water once per week through water hoses and must carry it home in buckets. There is no sewer system and the houses are built on poles in swampy areas. During high tides, people walk on improvised bridges made of wood. The city has no parks or child-care facilities.

The daily income in Tumaco is less than two dollars per family. In most families, the mothers are heads of households and work in informal systems, washing clothes, as servants, or selling food in the streets.

An important aspect of the project is to set up a "communitarian pot" which will benefit 150 severely malnourished children. The "communitarian pot", a community approach to preparing and sharing food among those in need, consists of a burner and a big pot in a shared space in the community — a small stall made of wood. The menu varies from beans and pasta to soup. The mothers cook in turns. The

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Introducing our Congregation's New President

At the June 13 meeting of the congregational committee (CC), **Linda Hartke** was elected President of our congregation. She is serving her second year on the CC and now, as President, will provide important leadership for the CC and the congregation. Linda is Coordinator of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, and recently served six years on the Board of Directors of Amnesty International USA and two years as Chair.



Q. What role do you see the CC playing in the life of the congregation?

A. We are servant leaders. We serve a common mission and provide important leadership for the congregation. I believe good leaders are good listeners, but must also be able to make strategic and timely decisions and follow through on them. Supporting our Pastor, Music Director and staff team, and the work of concern groups is a high priority.

Q. What is your vision for the CC and the congregation?

A. Authentic ministry and the building of community is hard in any situation, but in a place like Geneva where people are under pressure and with constant change, it is even more difficult. Together we need to strive always to welcome people, to learn from one another, to seek justice and healing, to pray and to celebrate God's blessings — large and small.

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neediest children are fed while the 'cooks' benefit by getting food themselves. The children eat the food in their own plates, in a small space set up for them with tables and chairs.

This initiative will benefit 37 pregnant women, 45 breast-feeding mothers and 578 children up to 6 years old. It will also support training and salaries of 37 community agents to work directly with the affected families. They will visit the families every month to provide information and training in child-care, health education and citizenship; organize monthly meetings with the families, evaluate the health conditions of the children (weight control, nutritional checking, etc), and provide literacy teaching.

The last edition of the GenevaLutheran profiled the workshop and training house in the Caracoli neighborhood of Bogota, Colombia. The next issue will contain information on other 2006 sharing projects:

- Bringing Smiles to Young Faces, assisting street children in Mumbai, India
- Discretionary fund to assist individuals in extreme need in Geneva

Linda Hartke

Baptism

Isabel Sachi Kojima was baptized on Ascension Thursday, 25th of May 2006 in a joint service with the German-speaking congregation. She is six years old.

GenevaLutheran Team

Susan Steinhagen, Editor
Carl Bjertnes
Jacinta Goveas
Stephen Padre

Reflection by Reverend Lusmarina Campos Garcia

Three months ago, I visited the Bodmer Foundation with Carl Bjertnes to discuss the possibility of establishing a partnership for the celebrations of 300 years of our church in 2007. Bodmer Foundation owns some originals of Martin Luther's works. I had the privilege of seeing materials in the archives that were never before displayed, including some of Luther's sermons and the recently released Gospel of Judas. The codex which contains the Gospel may not seem very impressive at first; but that changes when one learns of its history and the reconstruction work.

In the Gospel of Judas, Judas is the closest friend of Jesus and the only one capable of understanding the need for Jesus to die. For this reason Jesus asks Judas to hand him over. "In the central part... Jesus teaches Judas the mysteries of the universe... As in other Gnostic gospels, Jesus is primarily a teacher ... revealer of wisdom and knowledge, not a savior who dies for the sins of the world. For Gnostics, the fundamental problem in human life is not sin but ignorance, and the best way to address this problem is not through faith but through knowledge." Speaking to Judas privately, Jesus says, "Step away from the others (disciples) and I shall tell you the mysteries of the kingdom. It is possible for you to reach it, but you will grieve a great deal." He says to Judas, with reference to the other disciples and himself, "You will exceed all of them. For you will sacrifice the man that clothes me." Death is the means by which Jesus is liberated from his flesh in order to return to his heavenly home. Judas betrays Jesus, but he does it to answer Jesus' request. Judas helps his friend discard his body and free his inner self, the divine self.

In selecting materials for inclusion in the canon (the Bible), the understanding of the redemption of the body through Christ prevailed. God became flesh and lived in and loved this world. Also prevailing was the understanding of the existence of one God, creator of heaven and earth and light in Godself. Sal-

vation through faith prevailed. I believe in these concepts and appreciate them. But other comprehensions were also preserved, as embedded in patriarchy — God as a male figure; women excluded from leadership of communities and submissive to their husbands; human sexuality condemned if not heterosexual. I am deeply thankful to Luther for establishing criteria to read the Bible: "All that points to Christ." And I would say, "All that liberates human beings and commits them to each other as equals before God and one another; all that preserves creation as a whole and dignifies all relationships; all that promotes peace."

It is enriching to read materials that are not part of the Bible and see how sisters and brothers in the first centuries after Christ struggled to organize their faith. It is equally enriching to know that different types of understandings co-existed, offering us the opportunity to widen our horizons and learn from different perspectives. If you have the opportunity, why not to read the Gospel of Judas during your vacation? Have a good summer!

To read the complete article, please visit our website www.genevalutheran.ch

Concert for Peace

20 August, 17h00

Music from Monteverdi, Charpentier and Rossi S.
Ensemble Vocal E5 and Ensemble Aureus

Sopranos: Grazia Gullotta, Clémence Wyler
Alto: Vanessa Beck-Hurst
Tenors: Nicolas Gurtner, Daniel Benamram
Bass: Pierre Giamarchi
Cello: Alain Rihs
Organ, Clavecin: Guillaume Rihs

Regular Church Activities

Every Sunday morning

Christian Education Programme
3-12 yrs. old, 11:00 *church*
Adult Forum, 10:00 *Spaghetti Factory*
Sunday Worship 11:00

Every Wednesday

Confirmation class, 16:00
third floor of the church

Every Thursday

Bible study, 9:30 *Ecumenical Centre*
Junior choir, 18:30 *church*
Adult choir, 20:00 *church*

Monday-Saturday

Open Church, 12:00-17:00 *church*

Third Tuesday of each month

Japanese Bible study, 20:30 *home of Thomas and Koko Taylor, Il chemin Gamay, Bernex*

First Saturday of each month

Worship in French, 18:00
cave vouée at the church

Third Sunday of each month

Concerts for Peace, *church*

Every other Monday

Spaghetti at Night, 19:00 (*at various homes*) For details, check website or contact Jacinta Goveas (goveas@unhcr.org)

Bible Readings

August 6

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15
Psalm 78:23-29
Ephesians 4:1-16
John 6:24-35

August 13

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
I Kings 19:4-8
Psalm 34:1-8
Ephesians 4:25-5:2
John 6:35, 41-51

August 20

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Proverbs 9:1-6
Psalm 34:9-14
Ephesians 5:15-20
John 6:51-58

August 27

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18
Psalm 34:15-22
Ephesians 6:10-20
John 6:56-69

September 3

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9
Psalm 15
James 1:17-27
Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

September 10

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Isaiah 35:4-7a
Psalm 146
James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17
Mark 7:24-37

September 17

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 116:1-9
James 3:1-12
Mark 8:27-38

September 24

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Jeremiah 11:18-20
Psalm 54
James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a
Mark 9:30-37

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle Refreshment Duties after Worship

Week 32: 6-12 August

Canada, USA

Week 33: 13-19 August

Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia

Week 34: 20-26 August

The Pacific islands: Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa and the French Overseas Territories of New Caledonia (Kanaky) and French Polynesia (Tahiti)

Week 35: 27 August - 2 September

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

Week 36: 3-9 September

Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia

Week 37: 10-16 September

Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Yugoslavia

Week 38: 17-23 September

Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania

Week 39: 24-30 September

Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine

Week 40: 1-7 October

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

Every week a neighbourhood group prepares refreshments after worship. If you are not sure which group you belong to, please contact the church.

August 6

(*Chêne-Bougeries, Florissant, Cologny, Vésenaz*)

Group G

August 13

(*Lancy, Onex, Bernex, France Haute Savoie*)

Group H

August 20

(*Nyon, Coppet, Crans, Gex, Ferney*)

Group A

August 27

(*Versoix, Bellevue, Chambésy, etc.*)

Group B

September 3

(*Meyrin, Vernier, Châteline, Lignon*)

Group C

September 10

(*Grand-Saconnex and Petit-Saconnex*)

Group D

September 17

(*Servette, Paquis, Vermont, Délices*)

Group E

September 24

(*Centre Ville, Jonction, Carouge, Eaux-Vives, Acacias*)

Group F

300 Years – Time for Transformation?

We sit in Geneva, the heart of the world's organisation of church life, of health, of politics, of peace, of human rights... even wealth. Each New Year, we wish our family, neighbours and friends all the best of these. But our world is failing. Every 4 seconds a child dies of malnutrition or infected water, yet we throw away more than 50% of all food harvested on earth.

"...Half the world lies down and quietly dies..." goes the 1970's song about sympathy. Thirty years on, however, the situation is simply worse.

Can we, you and I, the Lutheran Church of Geneva, be a catalyst to transform our world? And if not the world, at least our city? Can we imagine a sustainable humanity? Can we be a driving force for a better tomorrow, for you, for me, for our children and their children? We are called to make a difference.

Two thousand years ago a seed was planted in Palestine and led to the cross. At the crossroads of a falling world, it is our responsibility to pick up the cross, to transform the world from the inside out. Through us and our church family, through our knowledge and capabilities, we can move forward together as one taking

many people's lives to a whole new level.

In 2007, we will be celebrating 300 years of the first formal Lutheran service held in Geneva. 490 years since Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses for the world to appreciate, a new way of life was born. Let us carry forth Luther's legacy by asking ourselves, "how can we transform our societies nowadays?" Let us be standard bearers of the spirit of Geneva as Lutherans.



You have been placed in this church, in our city. Let's make our tomorrows a little bit better. Let's mobilize our city, even the world, like Bob Geldof's high endeavours. Let's de-

termine to use our unique "in-hand" capabilities, to be a catalyst of transformation. Let's create hope, jobs, new meanings and mentality.

As we celebrate the past 300 years of our church, we want to look toward the future and see ourselves as those who transform lives, both in Geneva and around the world. To join the celebrations, please contact us at celebrate300@genevalutheran.ch.

Carl Bjertnes

From Japan to Geneva – and everywhere in between

Ask The Rev. Satoru Kishii to show you how he has spent the last several decades of his life, and there are a variety of ways he could do it.

An extensive collection of key chains, purchased from nearly every place he and his wife, Noriko, have visited, shows how widely he has traveled. Their scores of photo albums also carefully record every trip he has taken. Or he might throw his voice and speak to you through a special companion on his knee.

Pastor, traveler, writer, teacher, tour guide, and even ventriloquist, Kishii has had a variety of interests over the years.

Growing up in Japan, Kishii had studied to be a medical doctor, but God surprised him as a young man to become a Christian and spend his career in the Lutheran Church. A friend had invited him to a Bible class led by an American missionary. He was baptized at 21, and only four years later had completed seminary and was ordained as a Lutheran pastor, something he had decided to become even before his baptism.

“I said no, why should I?” Kishii recalls, referring to his first invitation to attend the Bible class. “I was in the naval academy during the war, when the U.S. and Japan were enemies. Why should I go hear an American?”

But Kishii went. He remembers that tea and cookies were served after the class, still a rarity in Japan five years after Tokyo was devastated during the war. “Sweet cookies and tea,” he says. “It was like something in heaven!”

While a seminary student, Kishii was asked to leave his home in Tokyo and help with evangelism at a small church in the country. He resisted this as well, not wanting to leave the place where all his friends and his mentors were.

But at this church, he met Noriko, who would later become his wife.



Pastor Satoru Kishii and his wife Noriko on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary

By the late 70s, Kishii had served as pastor in various congregations in the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church and taught at the Bible school. In 1980, he and Noriko moved to Geneva, where he worked as the Asia secretary for the Department of Church Cooperation in The Lutheran World Federation (LWF). During his 11 years with LWF, he traveled throughout Asia, helping to develop and maintain the LWF's relationships with its member churches in the region.

Kishii retired from the LWF in 1991, and he and Noriko decided to stay in Geneva because their son and daughter were married here and also live in Switzerland. For ten years, Kishii then worked as a guide, mostly in Geneva and other parts of Switzerland, for visiting Japanese tourists.

Although he's now “fully retired,” Kishii is still active in many ways. Since 2000, Kishii has written and published three books on subjects ranging from the Bible to Geneva church history. He also writes for the monthly magazine of the Japan Club of Geneva.

Still a teacher in several ways, Kishii leads the congregation's Japanese Bible study and is known

for leading the occasional tour of Geneva's Reformation sites.

Although Kishii does not practice his hobby of ventriloquism much anymore – something he learned many years ago – he used to entertain with it in Sunday school classes, nursing homes and even at two prisons.

He and Noriko still travel extensively. Their photo albums chronicle stops at famous and hidden landmarks in Switzerland and across Europe, from castles to burial places of famous people. A favorite tradition is to photograph Noriko with their car in front of signs for mountain passes in Switzerland.

Each time they come and go from their home, Satoru and Noriko pass their collection of 2,000-some key chains, reminders of all the stops they've made around the world. But one key to their lives is never to stop seeing the world and doing the things that bring them joy.

Stephen Padre

New Congregational Committee Meets and Organizes

The newly elected Congregational Committee met on 13 June with the outgoing members of the Committee for orientation, handover and organization. It was agreed to elect four officers as provided in the constitution (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer), leaving open for now the question of whether or not the position of Financial Secretary is necessary.

The elected officers of the English Speaking Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Geneva are:

President: Linda Hartke

Vice President: Jacinta Goveas

Treasurer: Michiel Hardon

Secretary: Vinita Manchala

Each Congregational Committee member agreed to serve as a liaison to at least one concern group (though there may be some shifting around):

Communications:

Maureen Gumbe, Stephen Padre

Fellowship:

Les Kojima, Elliott Paige

Nurture:

Jacinta Goveas, Vinita Manchala, Penuel Kiondo

Outreach:

Carl Bjertnes, Stephen Padre, Sheila Shyamprasad

Sharing:

Musa Filibus, Linda Hartke

Stewardship:

Morgan Gould, Michiel Hardon

Worship:

Jacinta Goveas, Ana Villaneuva

The primary liaisons to the planning for the 300th Anniversary for the Congregational Committee are Carl Bjertnes and Maureen Gumbe.

Members (5) to represent our congregation on the Church Council were elected: Carl Bjertnes, Linda Hartke, Les Kojima, Stephen Padre, and Penuel Kiondo. At the subsequent Church Council meeting (the joint body with the German and other congregations), Carl Bjertnes was elected President and Les Kojima was elected Secretary. It was agreed to move the monthly Congregational Committee meetings to Wednesday evenings. The next meetings are scheduled for: 23 Au-

gust and 13 September.

Deep appreciation was expressed to the outgoing members of the Congregational Committee for their service, with a special word of thanks to Masahiro Hayafuji for his leadership as President during the past year.

Congregational Committee Retreats!

The recently elected members of the Congregational Committee met for a day-long retreat on Saturday, 8 July at the offices of the World YWCA. It was a day of prayer and reflection, getting to know one another better, and planning for the work ahead. The major areas of discussion were:

How do we wish to work together as a Congregational Committee?

We want to work by consensus, and use the talents and strengths of individuals on the Committee and in the congregation. We noted the importance of our commitment to this service on the Congregational Committee, accepting the responsibility that accompanies such service. We also agreed to give greater attention to the Report of the Pastor in our meetings.

How do we wish to work in service to the congregation?

We want to be more transparent about our work: sharing meeting agendas in advance, inviting input, reporting back on outcomes, examining the format of the Assembly, and strengthening links to the concern groups.

What are our priorities for the Congregational Committee for 2006-2007

Outreach: Building our visibility and relevance in Geneva, inviting people to this congregation, being a truly welcoming place, and growing our membership

In reach: Strengthening our community of faith within the congregation, reaching out to members that have become less active and drifted away from us, and inviting those who visit to make our congregation their church home

Strengthening the financial foundation of our congregation: We are in a period of

real financial challenge — we count on the financial support of all of our members and visitors, and recently this has not been enough for our lean annual budget; the outreach and in reach described above will play an important part in this priority which may also include actions such as promoting pledging by members to allow for more reliable budgeting, increasing our income, growing the reserves, and looking towards development of a mission endowment fund.

300th Anniversary of the Lutheran Church in Geneva

We discussed planning for our church's 300th anniversary that will be celebrated next year and provided input to the special meeting of the Church Council on 10 July regarding the mandate for planning the anniversary (roles, relationships, risks and accountability), proposed themes and the development of a logo.

Outreach and New Arrivals in Geneva during August and September

Given the urgency of outreach efforts in August and September, when many new people move to Geneva, the Congregational Committee strategized around targeted outreach at large corporations and international organizations. The plan will be led by our members serving as "ambassadors" to do the outreach, which includes making key contacts, submitting an article about our church for newsletters and welcome packets, sharing the brochure about our church, posting information on bulletin boards, and personal contacts and invitations for newcomers to visit our church. A kit of resources will be developed to support these efforts.

A full report of our work during the retreat will be on file in the church office. Please feel free to speak to Linda Hartke or any other member of the Congregational Committee if you have questions and comments on this report and the actions summarized here.

Visiting "the Woman at the Well"



Ever since our family moved to Southeast Asia in July 2003 we had in mind to visit the village well built in memory of Margaret Jensen* in Cambodia. When Margaret died in 2001 after a long battle with cancer, friends from Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Geneva (ELCG) — especially the choir — honoured her life and her long work with LWF by donating funds to build a well in Kompong Chnang Province, Cambodia, a couple of hours north of the capital, Phnom Penh. Today, seventy families in the village depend on this well for clean drinking water and for sustaining livestock, fruit trees, and garden plots.

Maryssa Cammado made our visit possible by putting us in touch with LWF staff in Phnom Penh. Their colleagues in Samaki Meanchey District generously gave us a morning of their time to talk to us about the well, walk us around the village, and introduce us to many residents, curious about these foreign visitors and what connection they had to their well.

We tried to explain that Margaret had been our friend and that her many friends had made it possible to build a well out of love for her and to continue her commitment to giving to others. We think the interpretation into Khmer did not quite convey all that, and that some folks might have thought that our family

had built the well, or was thinking of building another.

But their gift of hospitality needed little translation. We were treated to hot palm sugar tea from the trees growing near the well and we saw the newly-harvested rice crop spread out to dry, villagers boiling palm oil into sugar for their own use and to market, and various livestock— all benefits from having sufficient water in the village.

Cory was most impressed by the sophisticated quality of the well, and that we could actually see the impact on the community's livelihood. **Jasper** was glad that the gift had been used to give people water, "something they really needed", instead of a "church,"— giving his parents opportunity to remind him of the parable about giving the thirsty a drink of water.

John was struck by the community structure to maintain the well and decide how best to put the water to use in supporting local livelihood. The well was not just an economic investment, it was an opportunity to put grassroots democracy into action, and this is what would keep the gift giving into the future.

For me, it was a poignant moment to hear the LWF country and district directors and the community leaders talk about empowering rural communities to expect their elected

government to provide basic public services — like clean water — as a matter of rights (a development perspective that Jaap Schep has also shared with us over the years from his work in LWF). Beginning in October when several trade union leaders had been arrested for criticizing a government policy, I had been spending considerable time in Cambodia — trying to gain permission for the International Labour Organization to visit the prison and consulting other UN agencies and diplomatic missions about concerns for democracy and freedom of expression. The week of our family trip, several leading human rights activists were also arrested, on the same charges, and tensions were running high. So I appreciated this common perspective, between non-governmental and UN agencies, that more productive livelihoods and poverty reduction are linked to understanding rights and the ability to exercise them.

Now, tensions have relaxed, the trade union and human rights leaders have been released, and opposition political leaders have been able to return to the country. These are hopeful steps in a country that still needs a lot of hope.

We want to share the warm greetings and thanks of the townspeople to all of you who helped make clean water readily available in Margaret's name. We went back to being tourists that day, but carried with us the blessing of being part of the ELCG community and the blessing of a shared moment of hospitality in Chamka Svay Village.

Chris Evans-Klock

John and Chris Evans-Clock and their twin sons, Cory and Jasper, who were active members of our congregation, are moving back to Geneva after living in Bangkok. It will be great to have them back in our midst.

**Margaret Jensen, a former member, lives in the memory of many of our congregation. Our congregation accompanied her in her long battle with brain tumors. She was an active member of the choir. One of the projects that need to get finished is a choir CD in her memory. It will happen.*

Choirs by Reverend Terry MacArthur

Singing is great to keep body, mind and spirit alive and there is nothing like African songs to get the heart rate up. When we sing long phrases, we have to control the breath. Most of us don't breathe deeply enough; singing opens up some of those unused parts of the lungs. Making music with one another allows us to connect and find a common sound. It's fun.



Traditionally, we are a no-guilt choir, understanding that many people travel a lot, and therefore, won't be able to attend choir practice every week. Practices are lively; we sing things from all over the world, so that we can help the congregation participate in the worship on Sunday morning.

Adult choir starts again on 31 August at 20h00 in the church. Except for 7 September, a public holiday, we will be in full swing for the fall. Junior choir starts up the same week. Some parents and children would prefer to meet on Friday night at 18h00 rather than on Thursday. It seems this is better in terms of avoiding staying up too late doing homework for school the next day. I am open to the shift but would appreciate more feedback about this. If we choose Friday, Junior choir

would start on 1 September. Junior choir members need to have some ability to read words because for older members it is boring if we have to teach by rote.

We might start a youth singing group; the timing of this will be decided after high school students check their schedules to find a good time to

gather. The group might sing in church once a month, and may lead the singing for the church school on some occasions. Of course, youth are also invited to join the adult choir.

There was a suggestion to have times of community singing, when people gather just to sing the songs they like. We could do a poll to find the English-speaking congregation hit parade. We might have a Gospel night, or a Caribbean night, or an Indian night or a Pete Seeger night, or a Beatles' night, along with some reflection on the Beatles' influence on the religious understanding of our times.

It is good to sing together. We cannot imagine angels gathered around God's throne, without hearing them sing.

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