



I've been invited to offer the *eulogy* today –to offer a “good word.” There are so many good words to say about Dan Hoggatt – beloved friend, brother, uncle, professor, choral director, musician. But I've been asked to reflect particularly on Dan's time at San Francisco Theological Seminary. Dan was my partner in ministry there, but before that he was my teacher. And he always will be.

Dan served at SFTS as the Professor of Church Music. But he taught not only church music; more broadly he taught *worship* – and the words of worship – both in the classroom, and in our daily chapel services – as he collaboratively designed worship with a student worship team – teaching us, as we did the work. AND, those of us who sang with Dan, know that we perhaps learned most from him as he conducted Seminary Singers – what one might call more of a boot-camp learning experience. An experience of intense learning that culminated each year in the beauty and holiness of the Lessons and Carols Advent service.

This week, I asked some friends who were also Dan's students what they thought needed to be said today. And their answers knocked me off my feet.

One said: “Dan Hoggatt is the reason I am a pastor.” Another: “Dan was a minister to ministers.” Another: “Dan is the standard by which I measure every musician I work with, which is unfair because it sets the standard so very high.”

One thing stood out in those conversations: We all remembered that Dan - our professor of music -- impressed on us – again and again – that “words matter.” You see, Dan was not only a professor of melodies, and harmonies, but also of words – of sacred text.

- Dan taught us that when we sing *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*, when we sing about “thy GREAT salvation,” we need to make clear that it is indeed GREAT – and if we can to emphasize that with a rolled, Scottish R.
- Many here will remember how Dan taught us to sing phrases in *Chill of the Nightfall* (which we’ll sing in a bit) so that the words convey their particular meaning– “splendor of starlight” really needs to have space for “splendor.”
- Dan reminded seminary students that a pastor has responsibility for choosing the words for worship – and so, if we are asking folks to sing *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*, Dan told us we better be sure we know what an “Ebenezer” is.

Dan wanted us to understand that we have the sacred task of inviting people to sing and to say the words of worship – and that those words have the power to

shape how we see ourselves, and how we understand and experience God's love for us.

Dan was not only a teacher, but also a pastor to his students (and to his colleagues). He tended not only to the syllabus, but cared for each student as a whole person – always with an ear to listen and a shoulder to lean on. Both Dan Hoggatt and Jack Hoggatt found vital ways to live out their ministry –

*as called and as ordained as any I have known –*

at a time when church policies unjustly discouraged people like us from serving in the fullness of who we are. Dan and Jack ministered anyway – faithfully – in the fullness of their gifts and their whole being – Jack in the MCC church, and Dan as a musician and teacher.

Dan brought this experience of the church – the church he loved – to his teaching – always with an eye and a heart for students who somehow found themselves/ourselves on the margins. A heart

- For LGBTQ+ students, uncertain if we would ever be ordained
- For women, serving within patriarchal church structures
- For African-American students, whose worship traditions were too often overlooked – or worse appropriated – by the dominant culture
- For Korean students – space to sing songs in their language in a strange land

Dan always sought to find ways that chapel worship could embrace the cultures of each and every student on campus, and meaningfully give them/us an opportunity to worship and to serve. Dan got it.

And Dan also taught us about Jesus. I can't sit down today without mentioning Dan's deep and beautiful faith in Jesus Christ. In any conversation, Dan was the first to bring up Jesus – whom Dan would confess was a constant companion in his daily life.

About a year ago, a few of us realized we hadn't heard from Dan. Michelle Walker reached out to Judy, and Ev, and me, and we learned that Dan was in a coma, and that Jack had passed away. I was the closest, so I got in the car and headed to the hospital, expecting the worst. I walked in, and Dan was chatting away on the phone, he said, "Oh, I've gotta go – look what the cat dragged in" as I burst into tears. We talked, and cried a bit – and at one point, Dan said, "You were coming to say good-bye, weren't you?" I nodded. Then Dan said, "There are so many times in my life when, by all account, I should have died. I know that it doesn't make any sense that I'm still here. Scott, every day – every day that I wake up – I know that it is a gift from God – and it feels like for some reason, I have been given this glimpse – again and again – of resurrection."

Dan taught me so much.

The good word today is the life that Dan Hoggatt lived among us.

- Because Dan Hoggatt has lived among us, there are more people in the world who have found our voice.
- Because Dan Hoggatt has lived among us, there are more people who look on the world with a broader horizon of compassion.
- Because Dan Hoggatt has lived among us, there are more people in the world who sing and live with an ear for others – to blend and harmonize with the voice of a neighbor, and to listen for voices long-silenced.

The good word today is indeed the life that Dan Hoggatt lived among us.

May it continue to sound in us, as we continue to sing together with Dan, and with each other, and with all creation -- in manifold witness, to God's GREAT faithfulness, mercy, and love.