

Hands In Praise

American Sign Language
Christian Choir

OUR FAITH STATEMENT

*"We believe there is only one God,
who exists eternally in three persons,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

We believe the Bible is the holy and infallible word of God.

*We believe that Jesus, who is God incarnate,
is the way, the truth and the life."*

OUR MISSION

We, the members of **"Hands in Praise"** Christian choir, worship God and share worship in song by signing in American Sign Language (ASL).

Since ASL is not English and uses a completely different grammatical structure, the signs frequently will not match up with the song's English word. The choice to use ASL occurs for two reasons.

The first reason is to show respect for a language that is not our own. Many church-goers love praise signing for its beauty and its ability to enhance their worship. While these are perfectly fine reasons to sign in church, it's also important to remember that sign language has a direct connection to a cultural group. It's easy to recognize a song sung in Swahili as a form of expression different than our typical style of singing.

The line becomes hazy when misconception leads one to believe that English and ASL are the same language; where one is spoken and one is through the hands. Our desire, to be respectful, leads us to use the most natural and native form of sign language within the United States-ASL.

The second reason, very simply stated, is ASL lets go of the word itself and conveys the meaning behind the word. By using ASL in worship, the meaning of the word, *the meaning within that specific line and the overall meaning of the song is conveyed*. Take the word "Lamb." Does this word mean the cute little animal? No, it means Jesus and his sacrifice for our sins. So in the songs, we convey the meaning, what is the song really saying when the "Christian-ese" is stripped away. By doing this, if a Deaf individual was present, that person would understand the intent and meaning of the song.

We believe by using ASL, which conveys the meaning of the song, it draws us into a deeper level of worship. We are often impacted by the *"new light"* that is given to a song when we are faced with what the creator, and ultimately, what God is saying. As we worship deeper, God's love and emotion flow from us, which we pray, impacts you and draws you closer to Him. It is to edify the body and to glorify God that we put our **"Hands in Praise."**

Throughout North America only 6% of all churches have an Outreach Ministry for the d/Deaf with total respect for their culture. Our appreciation is extended to Bethel Lutheran Church and its entire congregation for their support and sponsorship.

INVITATION TO JOIN

Anyone desiring to worship our Father, Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit through ASL is welcome to join us. You do not have to belong to Bethel Lutheran Church. The choir has members who belong to churches throughout northern Colorado.

**For information about joining,
requesting a performance or the choirs performance schedule,
contact Elaine Mainwaring, Choir Director at 970-686-5319 elainemain@ymail.com**

The choir performs, by requests, at churches services, community, special and memorial events.

