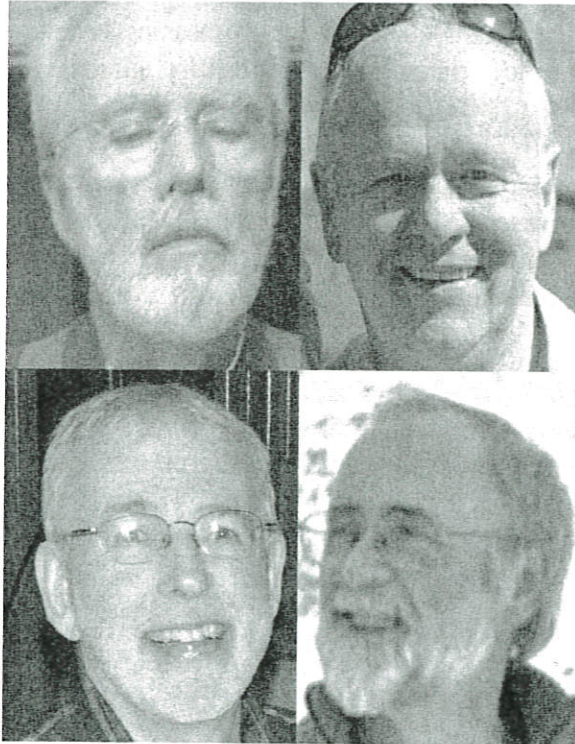


# CORNERSTONE

**MITCH CLARKE**  
SAX  
**PATRICK ELLIS**  
DRUMS  
**DAVID POS**  
PIANO  
**ROBERT RICHMOND**  
BASS



The service of worship called Vespers, originally begun at the rising of the evening star, is the Church's Evening Prayer. Lucernarium (literally: lamp, lamp lighting time) was another early name for Vespers. The fading of the light of day inaugurated the time when lamps were lighted. The Jewish tradition accompanied this transition in time with a blessing prayer, and Christians continued the custom. Thus the lucernarium, a preliminary rite, gave its name to the prayer service that followed. Our tradition has molded and shaped these forms of worship and prayer through an evolutionary process that is both faithful to our heritage and open to creating new traditions of praise.

Jazz Vespers often simplifies the time-tested pattern for evening prayer into four key parts. Ordered chronologically (and alliteratively for easy memorization), they are: Praise, Psalm, Proclamation, and Prayer.

The service begins with praise, perhaps a hymn, a praise song, a pop song, or a jazz standard, setting the theme of our time together. This theme is spiritual, without necessarily being theological.

In good Reformed tradition, every week includes the reading and singing of a Psalm. John Calvin recognized the power of music to "crack open" the human heart and wished that when music was used in worship, scriptural words be poured in.

At the intellectual heart of the service is the melding of musical numbers and one or more readings from Scripture. By placing related words and music in close proximity, we create a space where they resonate with one another, and with individual hearts, allowing individual meanings and messages to emerge as the Holy Spirit moves. The service comes to its climax as we pray on behalf of our world and our various communities.

The service usually concludes with a final musical number, and a spoken blessing.

Jazz was introduced to church in 1965, when Grace Cathedral in San Francisco commissioned a jazz mass. Numerous jazz composers have secured a place for this art form within the living tradition of the church. A sacred jazz discography would include Duke Ellington's sacred concerts on the RCA and Fantasy labels, Dave Brubeck's *Light in the Wilderness* on Decca and *La Fiesta de la Posada* on CBS and Joe Williams's *Feel the Spirit* on Telarc.

One of the dangers in using jazz music – well, using any music in worship – is idolatry. The personal virtuosity of the players can become the object of worship rather than a pointer to the Source of all good. The virtuosity of the performer is not an end unto itself. The musical tradition of jazz is about the task of giving voice to the hopes, dreams, frustrations and pain that expresses human experience. Jazz music reminds us who we are and where we have come from, while inspiring us to look more deeply the reality of who we can become in the Risen Christ.

Jazz is the music of the social gospel of Jesus Christ. Jazz is the musical incense that collects and carries the prayers of a people.

O come let us worship!