

# Local music director is spreading love for hymns

BY PETER DAINING

pdaining@grandhaventribune.com

**GRAND HAVEN TOWNSHIP** — Paul Lusher's singing voice carries a long way, but not quite as far as he might like.

Paul, along with his wife, Marlene, are using their Web site to spread their love of hymn singing across the globe from their home in Grand Haven Township.

The site — [www.songsand-hymns.org](http://www.songsand-hymns.org) — has received more than 1 million hits from all over the world, including some from places where Christianity is regularly suppressed.

"The underground church is alive and well, and it's because they read scriptures and sing hymns," Paul said. "I still think hymns are the best way to present the message of Jesus Christ."

In addition to maintaining the Web site for the past four years, Paul produces his own weekly radio program, "Adoration Songbook," which is circulated to more than 50 stations through the Moody Broadcasting Network.

Hymns aren't just Paul's passion — he also believes they give an essential foundation to the church.

"This is how you build a church," he said. "You don't build a church with songs written in the last 30 years. You can't. It just won't last."

Unlike the many churches now using mainly praise songs, Paul is a promoter of classic hymns — including "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," which he calls "the greatest hymn of all."

"Isn't it neat to know you're singing what John Calvin was singing?" he said. "To be shoulder to shoulder with the greatest saints of the past is a tradition that must survive."

The Lushers' Web site includes audio, sheet music, lyrics, devotionals, clips from their radio show and historical insight into the origins of each hymn, all attempting to show a new generation the power of hymns. He also produces hymns — which are used on the radio and the Web site, and are published as CDs.

"We don't waste one note," he



Tribune photo/Peter Daining  
Paul and Marlene Lusher sing a hymn as Paul accompanies them on the piano in his office on their Grand Haven Township property.

said. "That's why from a financial standpoint I can do this, because everything supports everything else."

Paul has a doctorate in vocal performance from University of Arizona and spent 15 years singing professionally and chairing the voice department at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

And throughout his extensive music career, the Lushers were never afraid to bring work home.

Marlene guided all four children through instrumental and vocal lessons, and three out of the four have chosen careers in music. Their eldest, Emily Grimes, 32,

See LUSHERS on page 2

# Lushers

Continued from Page 1

is the director of marketing for the Cleveland Orchestra; Jonathon, 30, is a professional cellist in Los Angeles; and Victoria McCarthy, 25, is working on a master's degree in piano performance at Western Michigan University. Meredith, 22, is double majoring in art and Scandinavian Studies at North Park University in Illinois.

"Music is a passion we both share," Marlene said. "We've both been involved in expressing music our whole lives, and teaching our kids was a natu-

ral expression of that."

Paul also works as the music director at Seventh Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, and has influenced the worship in many other congregations over the years.

Bill Billinger of West Olive, a long-time friend of the Lushers, said Paul asks the congregation to repeat a stanza multiple times until it really sinks in.

"He turned the whole congregation into a choir," Billinger said. "It was amazing."

And if Paul could have his way, the whole world will also soon be singing hymns as a single chorus.

**On the Net:**

[www.songsandhymns.org](http://www.songsandhymns.org)