

Our Mission: To unleash the musical gifts of our congregation and facilitate the offering of these gifts in worship in order to communicate the faith through music.

Give Chancel Choir a try on January 26

The Chancel Choir invites anyone who likes to sing to join us for an enjoyable evening of singing some easy music followed by refreshments. We'll sing from 7:30—8:15 pm, then break for snacks and conversation. **If you've ever entertained the notion of joining the choir, this evening is for you.** If you love it, keep us on your Wednesday night itinerary. Our usual rehearsal schedule is Wednesdays 7:30—9:00 pm, and 9:40—10:00 am on Sunday mornings. And by the way, our **rehearsals are always open to anyone who would like to come in and join us anytime.**



Jubilate Choir open house
Sunday, February 13th,
11:30—noon
For 1st—5th graders
interested in music.
Look for an invitation in the mail.



Calvin College Wind Ensemble to play at PFUMC

Saturday, March 12th, the Calvin College Wind Ensemble will play a concert in our sanctuary at 7:30 pm. The wind ensemble tours annually, including performing several times in Eastern Europe. **Volunteers are needed to help serve a light meal to the ensemble members prior to the concert and help with a reception afterward.**

On Sunday, March 13th, 14 members of the wind ensemble will offer music in our morning worship service. **Seven households are needed to host two students each overnight,** from Saturday evening until Sunday, bringing them to church by 9:00 AM, so they can prepare for worship. If you would like to be a host, contact Marcia Van Oyen 734



Would you like to carry a banner in our opening procession for Sunday morning worship?

Contact Marcia Van Oyen

Music Ministry Pilgrimage

We are truly blessed with a large number of musicians with many different interests and a congregation which is open to many styles of music. The musicians who participate in the music ministry cover a wide spectrum of ages and abilities – from those in the Chancel Choir who can sight-read readily to those who don't read music at all, from players in our orchestra who have dusted off their horn after many years to those who are just gaining expertise on their instruments, from 3-year-olds in the Cherub Choir to those who have been singing for thirty years. Sometimes we bring in professional musicians to supplement our own groups based on the demands of musical repertoire. Some of these musicians are not connected with another church, and we are glad not only to enjoy their music skills, but also to share our worship with them, and give them a chance to be part of a Christian community and hear God's word. We embrace and validate musicians of all abilities and do our best to offer them a way to participate. Sometimes it isn't possible to include everybody all the time. Ensembles in our music ministry run for a season or two (anybody remember the Revelation Choir?) or we may not have just the right spot for someone to join in. Resources and staff time get stretched thin, participation wanes or other changes in worship or our church programs require us to regroup. Nonetheless, our intention to include as many people as we can still remains.

Our openness to welcoming musicians of many varieties is founded on the belief that all kinds of music have the potential to be a vehicle for God's truth. We often hear the term "blended" applied to our use of many different types of music, but terms such as "mosaic" or "collage," which imply preserving the integrity of each individual component, are an even better way to describe what we do. Recently, a colleague of mine paid me a high compliment when he said, "Your music program is a great example for other churches of how to use various styles and not have conflict about it. It can be done. So many churches just keep having conflict about music." I believe it is God's plan for us to have unity in our diversity, to respect one another musically as well as personally, and to do our best to create a musical colony of heaven here in Plymouth. And I am encouraged by all of you who support this vision.

The path we have chosen, though, is not an easy one. It is exciting to have such variety, but it is a great challenge to sustain such a wide-ranging ministry. And I admit to occasionally entertaining the notion that it would be a whole lot easier to just sing from the hymnal and play classical organ music all the time. Many of my colleagues do just that. At a recent meeting I attended along with other Doctorate-holding organists, one of them made reference to praise songs and "words on the screen!" in a very pejorative manner. I held my tongue, since the middle of the meeting agenda didn't seem like an appropriate time to get on my soapbox. And despite our efforts to embrace variety, sometimes people in our congregation don't think we're doing enough of one style of music or too much of another. Do we get the right mix all the time? No. But what do we get right is that music is the servant of God's Word. And in turn, it is with a servant's heart that so many of the people who are the life-force of our music ministry approach their tasks. They are open to learning, guidance, and are willing to take on the yoke of offering music intended to underscore scripture, sermon and worship themes. They desire to glorify God with music. And for that I rejoice.

"God doesn't call the qualified; He qualifies the called." I don't know who said that, but it sure rings true for this classically-trained musician who has found herself doing a great many things she never imagined she would be doing. When we let Him, God stretches us in new directions. When we're willing to loosen our grasp on what we like and where we're comfortable, God shows us new ways to worship Him. And when we refrain from basing ministry decisions primarily on people's personal preferences, be they professional colleagues, folks in the congregation or ourselves, we become truly free to do what God would have us do.

And so I journey on, a bag of organ music slung over my shoulder, my saxophone in one hand and a folder stuffed with all kinds of music in the other, trying to keep my feet on God's path. I invite you to join in. And be ready for anything.

– Marcia

Musings from the Bench