

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.

Chancel Choir Trip planned for June

In mid-June, the Chancel Choir plans to head to Fort Wayne, Indiana, to sing for worship at the Bethel United Methodist Church. This church is currently unable to sustain a choir, so we plan to visit to share our ministry with them and offer some encouragement. We also hope to make a visit to the Gospel Barn in Hillsdale, Michigan, (maybe even to perform there) and stop in at Hidden Lake Gardens in Tipton for a time of prayer and devotions.

We all certainly enjoy offering our music in worship here at PFUMC week in and week out, but our trips offer us the opportunity to share our music at churches whose music ministries are struggling or diminished. We have the chance to experience worship with other congregations, sing in new venues, and build relationships. All of these opportunities enrich our ministry at PFUMC.

We thank you all for your support of our sub sale in February, which will help cover our transportation costs.



Noteworthy Concerts open to all

The Noteworthy "Concerts with a Cause" series continues to flourish. Thanks to the generosity of our audiences, this season **donations of nearly \$3000** have been made to the Wells for Africa project, Salvation Army and the United Methodist Children's Home.

As often as possible, the concerts will be offered with free admission. Some programs, however, involve very significant expense to present, so will be supported by ticket sales. It is our desire to make it possible for anyone to attend our concerts, so for those who might not be able to pay for a ticket, **complimentary tickets will always be available.** If you know of someone with such a need, please contact Marcia Van Oyen.

Upcoming events:

March 7 Village Voices Gospel Concert

March 19 Plymouth Community Band

May 2 Plymouth Oratorio Society

Music@First Fine Arts Academy Update

One of the goals of our fine arts academy is to offer music instruction for all ages. **In September, we were able to take a big step** towards meeting that goal by adding the Kindermusik program as part of our academy. Kindermusik is a curriculum used all over the world for teaching very young children—6 months—age 7 music skills. We have three certified teachers offering classes Monday—Saturday. In the fall, we hope to add music instruction spe-

cifically geared for older adults. In the meantime, private instruction is available for children and adults. Spring semester begins April 12. Contact our Academy Coordinator, Jon Hord, for more information 734-453-5280, ext. 12 or e-mail fineartsacademy@pfumc.org.

Check out our new web site:

www.music@firstacademy.org

Invitation

Look over these familiar situations below and choose the response (A, B or C) for each that would reflect your own: A. Sit quietly in your seat, moving little, and remaining silent, B. Clap, shout, stand up, C. Growing irritated at the outward responses of others

1. Your football team has just run an incredibly effective play to score much-needed points, putting them ahead of their rival.
2. Your candidate (no sides taken here...) is giving a speech with which you agree on every point, and his/her words are perfectly appropriate to the way you feel.
3. Your favorite musical group has just ended an exciting performance of your favorite classical/rock 'n' roll/jazz/gospel piece.

Now, imagine each of these venues – each of these “performances” – being very different. Imagine the football team taking a moment during the game to remember a fallen hero. Or the candidate describing a time of personal tragedy. Or the musical group performing a slow ballad, a more contemplative song. Your choice of answer a, b, or c just might change. I have been at symphony concerts where patrons shouted out a hearty “Bravo!” when the conductor indicated the final cut-off, and the well-dressed, well-heeled audience leapt to its feet to show its appreciation, applauding wildly. I have been in a football stadium where the rowdy crowd stood still and silent to remember victims of the September 11, 2001 national tragedy.

The same consideration might be given the sermons, readings, and music of a worship service. An enthusiastic testimony or heart-felt sermon might elicit an “Amen!” or two, while a personal story, shared quietly, might give you pause, and prompt you to sit and consider your own similar experience. What’s most important is that you are allowed to respond in a genuine way. Church worship is a place appropriately set-apart from our daily routine. But what takes place in our sanctuary might give us pause, cause us to wonder in awe at God’s majesty and grace, melt our hearts, or bring ecstatic joy. A variety of experiences, which will likely elicit a variety of responses... all of them appropriate.

But those responses should be genuine. If a vibrant message from the adult choir makes you clap for joy at God’s great mercy, clap enthusiastically! And if the tender strains of the children’s choir anthem moistens your eyes and invokes thoughtful contemplation, for Heaven’s sake CONTEMPLATE! Don’t sit mum and numb after the adults sing because you aren’t sure how others will consider your clap-offering. And don’t clap for the children just because they are children. Their ministry is to help you feel the presence of God and know the truth about Him: they are not performing for your pleasure. Tell those choristers after the service how much it meant to you to hear their song.

All human responses are (and should be) welcome in our sanctuary for the many affects created by God’s Holy Spirit working through the words, sacraments and music. It is a different place, not requiring us to act in the way of the world. How vibrant and exciting it is to participate actively!

- Nancy Whitecar

Just the other day, someone said to me, “What I like and love about you is that [music] is a ministry for you.” I replied, “It needs to be. Otherwise, what’s the point of being here?” Ministry is always job number one for music in the church. We need to focus our efforts towards offering what we do to God, and sharing our music in worship to proclaim truth, to inspire, to comfort, to praise our Maker. If performance is the primary goal, we should take our skills elsewhere.

I reflected on my own performance aspirations this past week, as I listened to a concert at Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor. Once upon a time, I walked out on that big stage to play my degree recitals on the huge pipe organ. At that point in my life, I was very interested in finding opportunities to perform concerts. But as I got more and more involved in music ministry in the church, those aspirations were swallowed up in a desire to make music to serve worship, and to help others do the same. Worship is our Opus 1.

- Marcia Van Oyen

Musings from the Bench

Not ready to sing, ring bells or blow your horn? You can still support the music ministry:

Our music ensembles are open to all. Come join us!

Wednesdays

Cherub Choir, 3yrs—K, 5:45—6:15 pm, room 307/309

Carol Choir, 1st—3rd grade, 5:45—7:00 pm, room 107

Wesleyan Choir, 4th—7th grades, 5:45—7:00 pm, choir room

Chancel Choir, 7:30—9:00 pm, choir room

Thursdays

Festival Bells, youth—adults, 7:30—9:00 pm, choir room

Sundays

Congregational Choir—all ages, Sunday mornings, come make a joyful noise!

PFUMC Orchestra, youth—adults, alt. weeks, 11:30 am—12:30 pm, choir rm

Worship Bands— youth band on Sunday afternoons

Usher for a NOTeworthy concert

Bake cookies for a Fine Arts Academy recital reception or choir bake sale

Be on the music committee, supporting the music staff and assisting with special projects

Design a poster or flyer for a music event

Sponsor a NOTeworthy concert or scholarship for a Fine Arts Academy student