

## **MUSIC DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

**Mary Chapman, Director of Music**

Everyone who congratulates me on how well the choir sounds receives the same answer: the choir makes me look good.

This group of talented musicians, mostly volunteers, meet weekly on Thursday nights for rehearsal and again on Sunday mornings. They learn (and re-learn) hymns for upcoming services, rehearse and learn anthems for services and special occasions, and in-between singing spurts, they share laughter and tease each other, and become a family.

While the pandemic has, for all the most part, subsided, we are still feeling the effects. Occasionally, one of our singers may contract or become exposed to COVID-19. At that point, the choir follows the guidelines set forth by the CDC, and quarantines and then masks as mandatory. On the advice of the Holy Communion pandemic advisory committee, rehearsals have been held in the chancel, as the air flow is safer than in the choir room. We will, however, return to the choir shortly for our rehearsals. Although the room is not well ventilated, a new, larger-sized air purifier has been purchased for our use, and should be more than adequate for our needs.

The most pressing matter for the music department is the search for a new permanent organist. Stephen Z. Cook formally joined the staff in Fall 2021, but then had to resign in May 2022, due to relocation to Nashville, TN. Stephen still follows our church online (he says, hi everyone!), and loved being with us.

We currently have a job posting online, and have shared this with our network of musician friends. A few candidates have applied, but none were what we considered a good fit for our church family. Until then, a slate of organist/pianist friends have agreed to fill in when available. Some have asked me if hiring a student would be a possibility, and I would have to say no. A student's focus will be on school, rather than on what we would need for our services.

In the St. Louis metropolitan area, there are currently twenty open organist/accompanist positions available. When speaking with other organist friends, they agree there is a shortage of good organists in the area. But this does not mean that our search is hopeless. This just means we have not yet found the right organist. Yet. That person will be found.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Mary Chapman  
Director of Music