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Publisher | [Bishop Geoffrey Woodcroft](#)

Editor | [Sara Krahn](#)

Accounting | [Joy Valencerina](#)

Advertising | [Angela Rush](#)

Layout & design | [cityfolkcreative.ca](#)

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[Editorial offices:](#)

Anglican Lutheran Centre

935 Nesbitt Bay

Winnipeg Manitoba, R3T 1W6

RLN exists to explore issues at the intersections of faith and life. In doing so we solicit and publish a range of opinions, not all of which reflect the official positions of the Diocese.

We acknowledge that we meet and work in Treaty 1, 2, and 3 Land, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota people and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land and their hospitality which allows us to live, work, and serve God the Creator here.

RLN welcomes story ideas, news items, and other input. If you want to be involved in this media ministry, please [email the editor](#).

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Photo: Sara Krahn

Cue the Music!

Advent and Christmas would surely be devoid of celebration without music. Music is foundational, permeating every activity, every ritual of our reveling and celebrating of this season. We hear it pumped through the mall as we do our shopping; we attend special performances of time-honoured holiday repertoire; we prepare Lessons and Carols services in our parishes; and at home, we unabashedly listen to our favourite holiday music, be it Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas," the garish but absolute classic *Christmas with Boney M*, Handel's *Messiah*, or Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* (an all-time favourite in my household).

What is it about music that makes it so integral to the holiday season?

The history of Christmas music can be traced all the way back to the Latin hymns of 4th century Rome. Traditional carols, as we know them, were developed later in the 12th and 13th centuries, many of them derived from popular songs in France, Germany, and Italy. Some of the first English carols appeared in the early 15th century and increased in popularity during the Reformation when music was more warmly received in the Protestant church (Martin Luther even wrote some of his own carols).

Today, the musical settings and liturgical texts for the Advent and Christmas season are among the most profound and uplifting of the church year. They express feelings of anticipation and joy and draw us together in communion and praise. But there's something else to the role that music plays during this season. We are drawn to music during Advent and Christmastime because it is a language and form through which we experience the impossible. As we engage in the musical festivities, we experience a revelation of a joy beyond ourselves. And as Christians, we recognize this joy as the miraculous birth of Christ.

December's issue is all about the revelatory nature of music. Our contributors write about their love for music during the holiday season, but also about the larger role music plays in the Anglican Church throughout its history and into the present day.

In our opening feature, Charles Garinger reflects on the important role music has played in both his life and the life of St. Benedict's table, where he currently serves as Music Director. Rachel Cameron expresses a similar sentiment in her report on the music ministry at St. Paul's Fort Garry. As St. Paul's Music Director, Rachel challenges her congregation to "explore, study, and recontextualize" music as they would the Bible.

In our second feature, Dr. Anthony Waterman, author of "What is the Anglican Church?," contextualizes the role of music in the Anglican tradition. And then, first-time RLN contributor Cass Smith makes her case for the magic of Christmas music. "Music is the ribbon that ties this all together," she writes. "It takes all the pieces of the past and brings them together with all the new magic and memories we create and fastens it with a Christmas bow."



Sara Krahn is the editor of Rupert's Land News.

Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT

Breathing in I calm my soul

Breathing out I smile

Living in this wonderful life

I know this is a wonderful life

- Thích Nhất Hạnh, Being Peace (1987)

YHWH where are the wise who teach your language of praise? Whom have you gifted to offer unceasing praise in your sanctuary and firmament? Who will tell of the great works you are performing today? As I search the lands upon which I have my being, it is, at first, difficult to see beyond self-absorption and human greed. Yet, when we focus beyond ourselves, we may find that we can see Your praise offered in every breath of the day.

Beyond the numbing din of individualism and consumerism lies an ever-filling song, accompanied by an ever-diversifying instrumentation. Not all singing and playing does so in a fashion that is agreeable to my ear and understanding, but still the song of praise increases with intensity and beauty. One interpretation of the verse "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord" suggests that all creation finds its voice to praise God with all its being. Luke tells us that some Pharisees asked

Jesus to quiet the disciples from praising God, but Jesus responded, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out." Clearly, the rabbi Jesus is teaching the praises of the one God of Israel, and not something foreign or distasteful to the leadership of the day.

Jesus will "let everything that breathes praise the Lord." This promise is illustrated in the four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, which serve as the lens and focus through which disciples see the world around us. Your neighbourhood is the orchestra pit and risers of the song. Let all creation give glory and cry-out to the maker of heaven and earth and the people who are continually promised Free Informed Prior Consent (directive from the United Nations Declaration on Rights for Indigenous people) regarding the land and water they steward. Trees and minerals hauled from the ground, and the animals and insects cast out of home, now praise the Lord. You and I are now called to not only witness the great praise raised to God, but to make the necessary arrangements to let it happen.

As I consider the numerous folks abused by and within the Anglican Church, thinking especially of Grenville Christian School among others, and Indian Residential and Industrial Schools, I cannot help but notice praise waiting upon thousands of readied breaths. We must shoulder past and present tears, loss of meaning and loss of life, and let the praise of all who have breath be released to God our creator now.

Hallelujah! To you, God, whose love knows no bounds, and whose freedom and deep care is for all of us who live and breathe. Let us reckon that it is you, O God, who teaches the entirety of your creation to breathe and offer praise in every breath. Let us seek and serve Christ in all persons. Let us respect the dignity of all persons. Let us remember to breathe. Amen.



Geoffrey Woodcroft,
Bishop of Rupert's Land

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Music in Difficult Times: A Report from st benedict's table

CHARLES GARINGER



Photo: [Robert Bye](#)

Music has been one of God's greatest gifts to us since the dawn of humankind. Rudimentary flutes and percussive instruments have been found in many prehistoric archaeological sites, indicating that the artistic spark has been imbued in us since the beginning. And there has always been singing. It would seem music is an integral part of what makes us human, in every culture throughout the world. To many, it is probably the most effective way to worship and connect to God. One can imagine ancient cave dwellers huddling around the fire, singing and playing music to stave off the terrors of the night, deriving comfort from this communal activity and perhaps transcending to something higher.

All of us have different giftings, but if you take a poll, many people list music near the top of their list of interests, whether they play an instrument or not. Many musicians have wondered why that is so difficult to commodify, but that is another subject.

Music is essential to our early cognitive development, and the comfort of a mother singing to her infant is undeniable (though not always foolproof). There was a movement some years back of parents playing classical music for their babies in the womb to facilitate this

development. There are studies that indicate listening to music activates parts of our brain, but playing music activates the entire brain. It's unfortunate that music is one of the first subjects to be cut when a school is under budgetary constraints.

When I was growing up, music was always a refuge for me. As a young child, I was known to fall asleep singing to myself. Apart from children's music, it was exciting for me to hear songs from my father's extensive record collection. I cherish many of these records to this day. I began my formal musical education at a young age, and almost immediately began writing my own simple songs. As a teenager, I began to develop my own tastes, and I remember being enraptured by certain songs, despite most of them being secular. I gradually began playing music with others in front of crowds and found the communal aspect of it enthralling. The exchange of energy was quite intoxicating.

This continues in a different form to the present day in my work as Music Director at [st benedict's table](#) in Winnipeg. St benedict's table uses a great deal of music that has been written by our own musicians and songwriters and is presented in various permutations of

groups in a non-performative style. During more normal times, I would often get goosebumps when the whole congregation would be worshipfully singing together. It is in these moments that I've felt the closest to God.

The past 20 or so months have been a challenging time for everyone. Our last pre-lockdown service was in 2020, on Ash Wednesday. This service is typically more intimate than our Sunday services, and we were honoured to have Bishop Geoff Woodcroft present with us for the first time. I remember the feeling of underlying anxiety in the air, but it turned out to be a good night.

Our lives changed quickly after that. The first lockdown ensued, and we were reduced to having only three musicians (down from seven), our Priest, and a volunteer to operate the live Facebook stream. We were in front of a camera for the first time at church. This was necessary for the live stream, but not at all in line with our non-performative ethos. Our leadership had to quickly adapt to using new technologies, and there were plenty of technical difficulties along the way. Later, we had to get used to singing with masks on, and for a time we were only able to have two musicians with no vocal harmonies.

Sundays have always been a beacon at the end of a week for me and continue to be. At the beginning of the pandemic, things were a little bleak, and the goosebumps were harder to come by. But we adapted. It was gratifying for

me to watch the services afterwards and see the comments knowing that our music was helping the congregation cope with the pandemic. During the long lockdown periods, Sunday services became even more important for our well-being. Sometimes, it felt as though this service was the only thing on the calendar for that week.

More recently, st benedict's table has been able to have a growing number of people attend on Sunday. We have a modified Eucharist, and though things are not exactly back to normal, it is a lovely improvement. We are looking forward to Advent and to playing the songs of watching and waiting. At Christmas, it is our parish tradition to use the big organ at All Saints and celebrate with sherry or cranberry juice and baked goodies. The organ is still happening this year, but the food and drink are not.

As of this writing, COVID numbers are rising significantly in Manitoba. Though there may be more setbacks, I feel that we can see this through to the other side. I pray that music will continue to help.



Charles Garinger has lived in many different places growing up, but he chose to move to Winnipeg on purpose. Charles is the Music Director at st benedict's table.

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What is 'Church Music'?

ANTHONY WATERMAN



Photo: [Michael Jasmund](#)

'Church Music' I shall take to mean musical settings of the Christian liturgy: the Eucharist, the Daily Offices, and occasional services such as weddings and funerals. This excludes other music performed in churches, such as most congregational 'hymns.'

At the heart of the Christian liturgy is the Eucharist, 'commonly called the Mass' (1549 *Book of Common Prayer*). In addition, the Divine Office of the clergy was normally sung from the earliest time, as were the prayers and

readings at baptisms, funerals and weddings. In the Anglican Reformation these services were translated into English and substantially revised for the new Prayer Book. And in 1550 the composer John Merbecke was commissioned to write the *Booke of Common Praier Noted*, with simple, unison settings of all parts of the liturgy normally sung by church choirs.

What were those parts? In the Mass, the so-called 'Ordinary' – *Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*, and the 'Proper' – excerpts from

Scripture appropriate to season and day (Introit, Gradual, Offertory, Communion). These were originally sung congregationally on simple, 'plainsong' tones. But by the 16th century elaborate, polyphonic settings for professional choirs had become common. Thus, in churches with many 'clerkes' (priests, deacons, and subdeacons) to form a choir, the lay congregation was silent.

In addition to the Mass, every cleric was obliged to use the 'Divine Office.' This was a daily recitation of the psalms at certain times of the day such that the entire Psalter was read in one week, together with hymns, a canticle and scripture readings. When the new English services were compiled for Anglican use the Divine Office was drastically revised. The seven

daily services were reduced to two: 'Morning Prayer' which combined Matins and Lauds (and thus included both the canticles *Te Deum* and *Benedictus*); and 'Evening Prayer' which combined Vespers or 'Evensong' and Compline, (which thus included both the canticles *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*).

Together with the Ordinary and Proper of the Mass, these when sung constituted 'Church Music' in England in the 16th Century. After some ups and downs the Mass was stripped of its Proper, and the Ordinary revised to reposition the *Gloria* and omit the *Agnus*. The definitive recension of *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) codified these revisions.

Why 'Church Music'?

Music is the way humans worship their god. In the Eastern Orthodox churches every word of the Divine Liturgy is sung except the sermon. Every word of the Jewish synagogue liturgy is sung. Chanting of public prayers is widespread in almost all other religions, including Buddhism -- and even in Islam despite formal prohibition in the Koran. In the Western Church what used to be called 'Solemn High Mass' -- in which almost everything audible is sung -- was the definitive form of our liturgy before the second Vatican Council.

Our intellectual lives depend on words, which alone can express our ideas. But music, which has been called 'the language of the emotions,' says more than words. It can reach out to express adoration and worship, love, joy and peace. Messiah and Bach's Mass in B minor tell Christians more about their God than all the sermons ever preached.

It is precisely this that the English Puritans, who had tried to seize control of the Church (1549-1660), denied. Their religion, like that of the Koran, was purely intellectual. The words of Holy Scripture, and the words of their own sermons, were all that mattered. Richard Hooker (1554-1600), lastingly influential theorist of the Elizabethan *via media*, defended the Anglican liturgy and its ceremonial practices at




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length against the Puritan attack. In particular, he upheld the importance of music as against the Puritans' rationalistic emphasis on words alone. For English Church music entered a Golden Age in Hooker's time. Thomas Tallis, William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Tompkins, and many others composed music for the Anglican Rite in the grand European polyphonic manner, still sung today.

But when the Puritans came to power during the Civil War (1642-45), they banned all singing save unaccompanied metrical psalms, disbanded cathedral choirs and smashed cathedral organs. During the dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell all Anglican services and even Christmas carols were forbidden. When Crown, Parliament and Church were restored in 1660 there was much popular rejoicing; and liturgical music came back in triumph.

Centrality of Music in the Anglican tradition. Unlike every other Christian church, the Anglican churches have no doctrine of their own. We care very little for doctrine: which leads some Christians to burn other Christians alive, and divides the church into warring sects. The Anglican tradition is based on worship, which unites all Christians in the Body of the Risen Christ. And this means that music, which is the idiom of worship, is central in the Anglican religion.

But because the ancient establishment of cathedral choirs was preserved at the Reformation, and because most parishes had only two 'clerkes', Anglican music has two styles. In cathedrals -- in England, the USA and many other countries -- Matins and Evensong was and is sung every day, and the Eucharist every Sunday and Holy Day. In many parish churches however, the effects of Puritanism lasted until the 19th Century. Matins, Litany and Ante-Communion were read by the incumbent and his (lay) clerk, the sermon was prominent, and two metrical psalms sung by all before and after the service, was the only music.

The Eighteenth Century was a low point in Anglican history. Though daily cathedral music continued, the musicians and their compositions were of poor quality, and the

clergy uninterested. Meanwhile the Wesley brothers, seeking to revive Christian life among the poor, produced superbly singable words and music for their open-air revival meetings, many of which survive in modern collections of congregational 'hymns' (Greek hymnos -- a song of praise.) Gloria in Excelsis and Te Deum are true hymns; and from mediaeval times strophic, rhyming verse has been sung in church: as in Veni Creator Spiritus at our Ordinations. But the Methodist mutation was a new thing, which has permanently affected Anglican (and now Roman Catholic) worship. Though as late as the Victorian era some incumbents refused to allow 'Methodistical' songs in their churches, they are now a regular part of sung services even in cathedrals.

The Victorian 'Oxford Movement' (1830-60) transformed parish church music in England. Until the 1840s, non-liturgical choirs of men and boys sat in a high gallery at the back of the church and sang some parts of the service. Within a generation these galleries were removed; and the choir, now vested in surplices, sat in the chancel as before the Reformation. Though few churches have choir schools or professional singers, these volunteer choirs often achieve very high-performance standards. In the 1990s the men and boys of All Saints' Church Winnipeg sang Vaughan Williams's unaccompanied 12-part Mass in G Minor at the Ascension Day Eucharist.

Since the 1940s, the ban on female voices has gradually been lifted, and most parish church choirs include women and girls. In some cathedrals separate girls' choirs now exist. And in many Canadian cathedrals without an endowed choir school, services are now expertly sung by amateur, adult mixed choirs, as in the USA and some other countries.



Anthony Waterman has been a Fellow of St John's College Winnipeg since 1959, and is Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of Manitoba. When in Winnipeg he has worshipped at All Saints' Church except when required elsewhere.

The Magic of Christmas Music

CASS SMITH

Photo: [Robert Bye](#)

It's that time of year again. The stores are lit up with Christmas lights, there are people shopping frantically, and there's a constant stream of Christmas pop music playing over the sound systems. Many people complain about it being too early or too loud or hearing the same songs repeated over and over. There may be some truth to these complaints; however, many of us find comfort and peace in the familiarity of both old and new Christmas songs. What is it about Christmas music that soothes us so? Is it the melodies? Or the lyrics? It's probably a little bit of both. I wonder, though, if it's also a nostalgia for Christmases past, for a time when our view of the world was very different.

As I sit here listening to Christmas music, I think back to times spent with my grandma listening to these same songs while setting up the Christmas tree, wrapping presents, and baking all the holiday treats my little self could possibly dream of. If I close my eyes, I'm sure I can still taste the warm gingerbread cookies, fresh from the oven! As children, we tend to see the world in a simpler way: the bright lights of Christmas are exciting, the music is uplifting, and there is a sense of wonder and anticipation within us. I don't think as children we have the

words to express how the Christmas spirit makes us feel beyond happy. We feel the magic both within and around us and we want to hold it tight with our sticky little fingers and never let go. Holiday music helps tie it all together.

As we grow up our view of the world changes. We stop believing in the magic of the holiday season. We stop believing that we are a part of it all. Perhaps, we have been hurt or are hurting and now the holidays are not what they used to be. I think Christmas means something very different once you stop believing in the magic of the holidays. I look at the stores blaring Christmas music and I don't think a single shopper stops to take it all in. Instead, we look for that feeling in a consumerist world. We want to buy the feelings of Christmas that we recall from our childhood. And yet, we are annoyed by the busy malls, the bright and flashing lights, and the loud music. A great example of this is found in both the book and movie, *The Polar Express*. The children hear the magic bell ringing, but as they grow up, many of them can no longer hear the beautiful sound it makes. There are only a select few who keep the music and magic of Christmas within them.



Photo: Cass Smith

For the longest time after my grandma passed away I, too, forgot what the magic of Christmas felt like. I couldn't listen to carols or really enjoy any holiday music. Then, one day as I was listening to the Trans-Siberian Orchestra's Christmas Canon, a version of Canon in D by Pachelbel, it all came flooding back to me. The memories, the smells, the feelings of joy and anticipation building in my heart. I think this is exactly what music is supposed to be for us. It unlocks something inside to let us remember, to heal, and to grow. Music has a way of meeting you exactly where you are and being exactly what you need it to be.

Now that I'm a parent, I get to watch the magic of the holidays grow in my children and I work hard to make sure music is a big part of that. I play Christmas music in the house throughout the entire holiday season. Everything from the pop Christmas we hear in the malls, to classic carols, to Fred Penner's "The Season: A Family Christmas Celebration" (a definite recommendation from this music lover!). I want my kids to grow up with love, joy, and anticipation in their hearts at this time of year and beyond. For me, it isn't necessarily about a certain religion or belief, but about the knowledge that magic is very much real and not only around us but also a part of us all. Having music tied to those memories may one day help my children remember when they are in a place where they, too, have forgotten the magic.

Music really is the heart and soul of the holiday season. It takes those memories from when we are children—the holiday baking, the tastes and smells, the wrapping of Christmas presents, the colourful papers and pretty ribbons, the Christmas lights, flashing and dancing with joy—and it helps us create new memories: playing with our children in the fresh snow, doing small acts of kindness for others, and creating our own family traditions. Music is the ribbon that ties this all together. It takes all the pieces of the past and brings them together with all the new magic and memories we create and fastens it with a little Christmas bow.

Without music during the holidays, the world would be less colourful. I truly believe that music is what connects our hearts to the hearts of others. It helps us find the magic in the world around us and within ourselves. May we never stop hearing the music play.



Cass Smith is a proud Indigenous and queer woman, and a person with a disability. She is a Mom of two kids and the partner of Rev. Theo Robinson. Professionally, she is a Child Passenger Safety Technician (aka "Car Seat Tech") and the coordinator of a local school lunch program.

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Parish News Roundup

Against the Grain Theatre brings back the stunning Messiah/Complex

Against the Grain Theatre presents [Messiah/Complex](#), a truly cross-Canada performance — in Arabic, Dene, English, French, Inuktitut, and Southern Tutchone, and accompanied by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. AtG Founder and Artistic Director Joel Ivany partnered with Banff Centre's Director of Indigenous Arts, Renelitta Arluk, to Co-Direct a new interpretation of the Messiah with the goal of amplifying this unique moment of pride and inclusivity in Canada—honouring and giving support to Indigenous and underrepresented voices from coast-to-coast-to-frozen-coast, and hoping to share these voices with an international audience.

Messiah/Complex will be available to stream on-demand December 12th, 2021–January 9th, 2022. [Register now to reserve your viewing spot.](#)

Nearly \$650,000 granted to 110 recipients through fall grant awards cycle

This week more than one hundred grant and bursary applicants received some welcome news that they will receive funding from the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC).

"I am delighted to say that the Board of Directors of AFC has approved close to \$650,000 in grants and bursaries to 110 applicants as part of its fall 2021 grant cycle," says Dr. Scott Brubacher, Executive Director. "This brings the 2021 grant awards total to more than \$835,000, one of the most generous years in AFC's 64-year history." Brubacher says an additional \$125,000 or more in disbursements from some of AFC's trusts may yet see the 2021 grants total hit the \$1 million dollar milestone.

[Read more.](#)

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Rupert's Land News is hiring a Reporter-At-Large!

Are you interested in writing about the intersections of culture and the Anglican faith? Would you like to gain experience in faith-based reporting in your local community? The Rupert's Land News is recruiting for a Reporter-At-Large to join our RLN team!

The RLN Reporter-At-Large will contribute one major news story to the RLN monthly magazine. This is a paid term position based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The position begins in January 2022 and ends in June 2022.

For a full job description, including application instructions, contact the RLN editor at rlnews@rupertsland.ca.

Christmas (II)

The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be?
My God, no hymn for Thee?
My soul's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds
Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.
The pasture is Thy word: the streams, Thy grace
Enriching all the place.
Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers
Outsing the daylight hours.
Then will we chide the sun for letting night
Take up his place and right:
We sing one common Lord; wherefore he should
Himself the candle hold.
I will go searching, till I find a sun
Shall stay, till we have done;
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly,
As frost-nipped suns look sadly.
Then will we sing, and shine all our own day,
And one another pay:
His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine,
Till ev'n His beams sing, and my music shine.

- George Herbert (1593-1633)

Music Ministry at St. Paul's – Respecting the Old, Exploring the New

RACHEL CAMERON

Photo: [Mayur Deshpande](#)

A detailed 100-year history of music ministry at St. Paul's Fort Garry could fill a lengthy chapter of a book. The parish has had many iterations of music ensembles and utilized service music in genres ranging from traditional organ and choral works to folk songs, Top 40 hits, and musical theatre selections.

My earliest memories of St. Paul's are of attending the early (more contemporary) service at which my father played guitar. Over the years, we have been blessed to be joined by numerous musicians; vocalists, guitarists, Celtic instrumentalists, percussionists, brass and reed players... the list goes on. By the late 90's, we had moved to a single morning service, with the music shared between the traditional choir and the folk style praise band, the Rejoice Group, with whom I was finally allowed to sing. Who knew that 20 years on, my own dad would be would be calling me "The Boss"?

In 2018, we entered on the next step of our musical journey as a mixed group, combining both the traditional choir with the Rejoice Group into one unified ensemble. As I moved into my new position as Music Director, my primary goal was to create a program where all genres and members felt represented and heard; to bring all talents together and grow them into a new sound.

St. Paul's Fort Garry, 2003



Pictured: Bill Kawka, Sterling Walkers, Lin Grieve, James Beauchamp, Heather Legary, Doris Whiting, Shirley Legary, Ann Cawker, Ruth Grieve, Donna Cawker
Front row: Peg Williams, Barb Hicks, Michael Kurek

Three years later, a Sunday service might look a little bit like this:

Comfort My People – Steve Bell, guitar and vocals

Worship the Lord – Voices United, guitar, vocal, piano

The God That I Know – New, Australian resource

Alleluia Sing to Jesus – organ, guitar, harmonica

Guide My Feet – acapella 4-part harmony

Bless the Lord (10 000 Reasons) – New, Christian top 40 song

Each service is planned almost like a mini concert, with the flow of music linked to the emotional pacing of the service. Generally, although not as a rule, we begin with more contemplative and/or traditional pieces and finish on a more contemporary and energizing note.

“Music is the universal language of [hu]mankind,” wrote Hans Christian Anderson (a Danish author who is best remembered for his fairy tales).

In theatre, we often say, “when you can no longer speak, you sing.” Music allows us to feel and express emotions more deeply in a way that plain speech cannot.

While some might be a bit shocked to hear what I have played in church (yes, both Disney and Rogers & Hammerstein have gotten involved), all genres of music have both merits and drawbacks. In choosing music for Sunday morning, I ask myself how a piece of music might support and enhance the message of this Sunday’s liturgy. Factors taken into account include: singing ability/accessibility, difficulty level, orchestration, familiarity, and if the is text reflective of theology and readings of the day. I believe it is important to continuously challenge and explore our faith and connection to God in new ways. As we continue to explore, study, and recontextualize the Bible in our spiritual growth as Christians, why not approach music in the same way?

Just as we are all unique individuals, walking our spiritual journey in our own way, so too do our musical tastes change and evolve daily. This includes the moments and the music with which we find our strongest connection. Traditional pieces can be comforting and reconnecting us back to earlier memories, reminding us of loved ones gone before. New music can excite and inspire us as we move in the world throughout the week. A varied selection of service music aims to blend the past with the present and connect with a piece of each person’s soul, reaching them wherever they find themselves on their journey.

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thorcare@shaw.ca | www.thorcare.ca



Rachel Cameron works as a freelance vocal coach, music director and conductor. She is a long-time member and Music Director at St. Paul's Anglican Church Fort Garry.