

Music- Choir

Written by Holly Phares

Please list the members currently serving on your ministry or leadership team.

- ❖ Annemarie Kleinhans, Beth Walker, Blossom Gica, Bob Robinson, Bobbie Nenjamin, Carrie Kreider, Dorothy Chea, Esther von Laue Bernard, Joanna Robinson, Joshua Matthias, Julie Steiner, Korbin Ritter-Butz, Kris Forrest, Luke Damian, Marjorie Rose, Richard Kalwaic, Sarah Sherr, Adam Sherr, Spencer Anderson, Suzanne Cole, Trixie Steiner-Rose, BruceConley, Kris Forrest, Rochelle Hammond, Meg Ouderkirk, Marjorie Wilhite

Please list what the goals of your group or ministry were for 2017.

- ❖ For the Adult Choir, to share a diverse variety of sacred choral repertoire as well as continue to enhance the strength, beauty and spirit of the congregational singing in their role as music ministers.
- ❖ In regards to additional special music from both folks who are not regular members of the choir and are members, to provide a variety of instrumental and vocal selections that can serve to enhance the beauty and depth of expression of our communal faith and worship experience.
- ❖ Additionally, we hoped to have our wonderful organ featured in worship services once per month.
- ❖ Were you able to achieve your goals for 2017? Please be as specific as possible of your successes and failures.
- ❖ I am proud to say that we did achieve our goals with choir and the organ, and did well in creating unique special music as well.
- ❖ The Old First family is blessed with folks throughout the congregation from the youth up through those in their "golden years" who possess rich musical talent, and many of them shared their gifts with us this past year. From vocal solos, duets, trios, The Lower Voices Ensemble, piano duets, piano/ organ duets, instrumental solos, piano solos, and both a guitar ensemble and Bluegrass ensemble, there was rarely a worship service without at least one special music offering.
- ❖ We also enjoyed some beautiful instrumental chamber music as part of a special church-wide potluck, featuring Julie S., Sarah S, and myself. There were many who felt that this could be a wonderful addition for future church-wide meetings and potlucks.
- ❖ I don't necessarily feel there were any outright "failures" per se. Perhaps I might have missed the mark in not programming enough special music on choir Sundays off, sometimes just providing this myself in either a piano solo or accompanying myself in a vocal solo. Sometimes, however, I called upon individuals in the congregation to play and just could not find anyone available for that particular Sunday.

Where is your group or ministry area stuck? What is your group or ministry area pondering?

- ❖ I do not perceive any area in which we are stuck. There are always some challenges if there are last minute illnesses and the voicing of the choir is effected by this, but the good news is that the choir ALWAYS more than makes up for the missing singers and adjusts their energies and vocal output to rebalance the ensemble within the brief warm-up prior to worship.

What do you hope to accomplish in the coming 2018 year.

- ❖ I would like to continue welcoming new singers into the choir, as well as feature instrumentalists from within the choir as well as from the congregation in a more deliberate fashion. There have been some new friends who have been attending rather regularly this past year, and I hope to connect with them as time goes by to see if they play an instrument or sing and would be willing to share their gifts with us, adding them into the already full roster.
- ❖ I also have started the process of creating opportunities for our shelter guests to gather with me and any choir members and members of Healing Presence Singers once or twice per month in order to sing together to enhance the quality of their lives. There are a handful of gentlemen who are very interested in participating and I will continue to collaborate with Bethesda in getting the word out and recruiting folks to join up. When I presented this dream of mine to the choir this past week, there was much enthusiasm and some are very interested in being a part of this musical ministry. I am very excited at the possibilities and hope to find others in the city with whom to partner in creating a more city-wide street choir eventually, which I have already decided will be called The Philly Street Choir. Stay tuned for more on this as it unfolds in the coming weeks and months ahead!

What are the ways that the church can support your team?

- ❖ I feel the church's extraordinary appreciation for the eclectic musical choices offered is a rather unique and affirming means of support that create and promote much inspiration and foster such a crucial foundation on which to stretch and explore even more unique and spiritual music in the coming year.