

## Music Ministry Report

Submitted by: Holly Phares

*List of the members currently serving on your ministry or leadership team:*

- ❖ Holly Phares, Music Director; William Lowden, Organist
- ❖ Choir roster: (active as of 12/2019) Bobbie Benjamin, Esther Bernard, Cole Charron, Dorothy Tee Tee Chea, Suzanne Cole, Bruce Conley, Kris Forrest, Madeline Forrest, Blossom Gica, Corlis Gross, Rochelle Hammond, Richard Kalwaic, Meg Ouderkirk, Bob Robinson, Joanna Robinson, Adam Sherr, Alexa Sherr, Anna Sherr, Sarah Sherr, Maxwell Staley, Julie Steiner, Trixie Steiner-Rose, Beth Walker, Marjorie Wilhite

*As you look at your goals for 2019, what were you able to accomplish? Please be as specific as possible.*

- ❖ More consistent attendance in Thursday evening rehearsals. We managed to increase the amount of members attending the weekly Thursday night rehearsals. I created a database chart that enabled me to stay on top of the attendance and gave me the ability to send reminders and nudge those who might be more laid back about attending these weekly rehearsals.
- ❖ More “family community” energy to enhance the music-making and members’ individual accountability and desire to be part of the “work” in preparing higher quality music that can both challenge them and increase their sense of accomplishment and spiritual fulfillment, knowing they are truly serving as well-prepared, committed music worship leaders. This past fall, I began the practice of including a short break in the middle of Thursday rehearsals to check in and socialize while having a light snack. I have received incredibly positive feedback from the choir about how much they love this new energy. We have also been able to usually cover 3 Sundays worth of music during our rehearsal time, enabling us to be more prepared and enjoy the music.
- ❖ Continued variety of musical styles... I believe we were able to share a varied and interesting array of musical styles this year. I do want to incorporate a few more moments with Bluegrass and Sacred Harp styles in 2020, though.
- ❖ Continued utilization of the various instrumentalists in our congregation to provide “special music.” I would like to have more folks step up with sharing their instrumental gifts. I feel I tend to use the same handful of wonderful folks, and want to be sure to inspire others who might be newer or need to dust off their instruments!
- ❖ Find a talented and dedicated part-time organist to fill the void after Beth Manus’ departure. So incredibly grateful to have hired William (Bill) Lowden, a wonderful and gifted retired organist. Bill has demonstrated his breadth of techniques in many styles and has truly continued to tap into the many faceted colors and range of expression inherent in our beautiful organ. He is also a wonderful colleague and musical partner with the choir and congregation. Bill requested to play two Sundays per month instead of the budgeted one Sunday, but not to receive additional compensation. As our compensation was already minimal, I felt strongly we needed

to at least increase it by \$50 per month. I requested from the Admin team to take that \$50 per month out of the special Bertollett Music Fund and then include that salary level in the new 2020 budget going forward, to which they gratefully agreed. We are truly blessed to have Bill with us and look forward to many years ahead together.

- ❖ To create an opportunity for the many “wee ones” in our church family to make music. I had hoped to take a few Sundays in the summer to offer 20 minute music-making gatherings for the little ones, as that age bracket is the largest in our present youth “roster” and I would love to start instilling a sense of community music-making in them, in the hopes that, as they grow, we could actually have a solid children’s choir. Unfortunately, due to family schedules, nap time and lunch-time needs that never came to fruition. Perhaps in 2020....

*Where is your group or ministry area stuck? What 2019 goals were not accomplished? What is your group or ministry area pondering?*

- ❖ I had hoped to put a substantial dent into culling out the choir closet choral library, but for varied reasons, I did not come even close to that goal. I am going to mindfully schedule a few Saturday afternoon “work days” with any able-bodied helpers who can easily climb a step-ladder and carry boxes, as well as help re-distribute choral library boxes.
- ❖ As mentioned above in the final bullet point, this was an area in which my goal was not able to be actualized. I am hopeful that I can devise some sort of creative design to gather the young children to make music. Perhaps meeting with parents or polling them on their thoughts and ability to commit...?

*What do you hope to accomplish in 2020?*

- ❖ I don’t have any particularly new goals, but simply continued expansion of the choir and additional instrumentalists, as well as fostering this “family commitment” energy we have truly been growing the past couple of months. I believe our wonderful “Carols for a Cause” concert with Christ Church “amped up” their energy and commitment - given such a wonderful cause for which to raise money AND sing with our neighbors as well. We hope to make that an annual event, expanding the invitation to other neighboring churches.
- ❖ I would just like to continue the (see statement in previous question.)

*What are the ways that the church can support your team in achieving your goals?*

- ❖ We are always grateful for feedback from congregation members when they are particularly moved or inspired by any hymns, anthems, special music selections or organ selections. Also, if there are particular songs or hymns folks feel they would like to have considered for a worship service, that they feel free to contact me (Holly) at: [holly@oldfirstucc.org](mailto:holly@oldfirstucc.org) or see me in church.

*The church will be 300 years old in 2027. How do you see your ministry evolving in the next seven years? What will it take to achieve those goals?*

- ❖ I would be very interested in having our organist playing every Sunday, as opposed to only two. (And compensated appropriately). I also feel, in time, and after the sanctuary is renovated, we could host a recital/chamber music series that would bring people into the church during the week. Lastly, my dream of forming a Philly Street Choir, with members of our shelter and other folks living with homelessness, is something I hope can manifest when the time is right.
- ❖ To achieve those goals, we would need to enhance the music budget (organist salary), as well as possibly apply for funding (for the Street Choir) in order to manage and fully realize these long-range goals.