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for Lutheran  
church musicians

# in tempo

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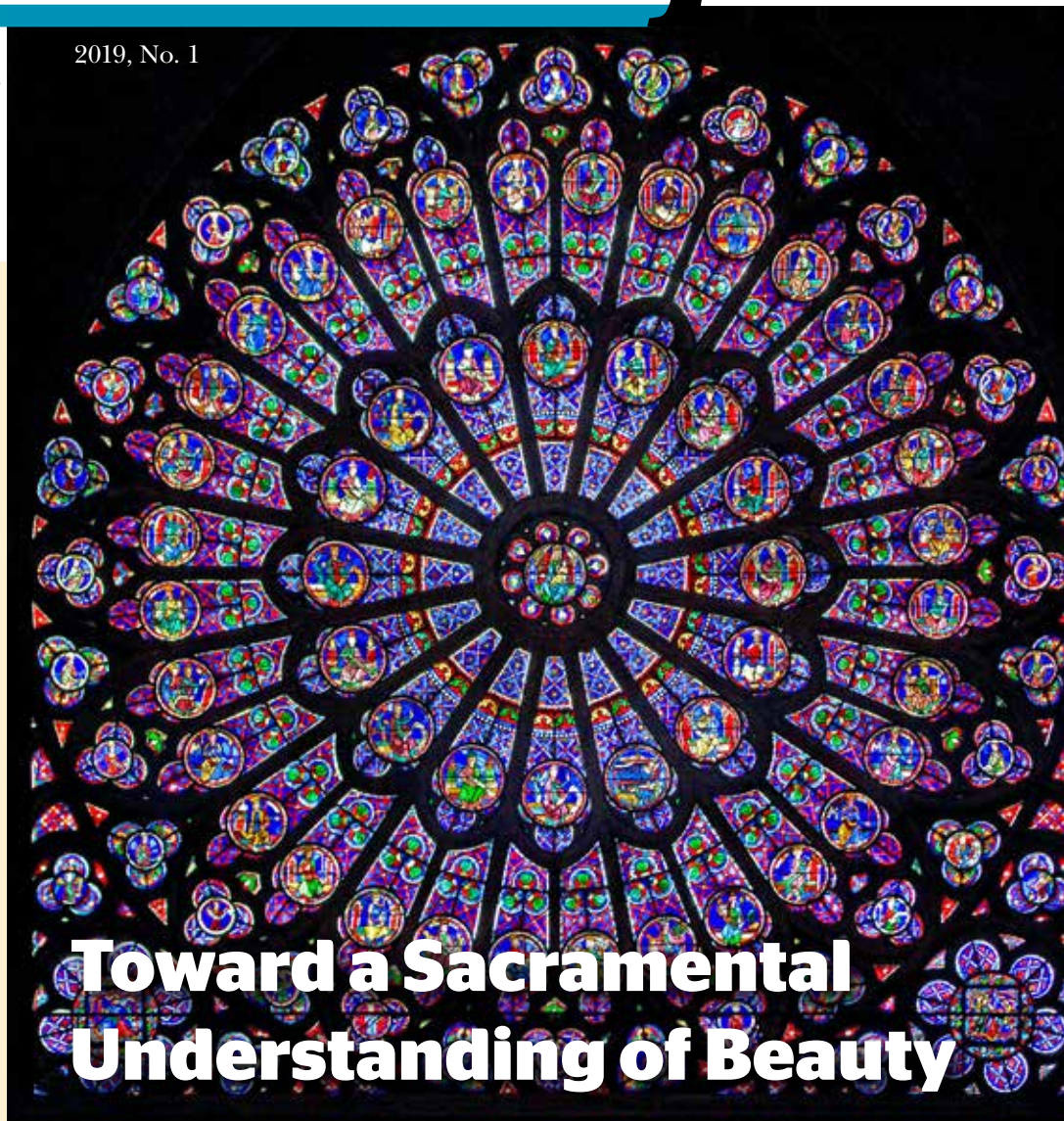
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## Toward a Sacramental Understanding of Beauty

*North rose window, Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris.*

by *Omaldo Perez*

**m**uch ink has been spilled expounding on the number of disciplines informing the broad office of cantor. A brief survey of this publication's archives alone paints an engrossing picture of the many areas from which a church musician must draw: music, history, theology, psychology, and pedagogy, not to mention organizational and administrative skills—all gathered under the ample tent of ministry.

Integrating or “re-membering” this sea of knowledge and skills into a unified whole in the service of the church—and one’s local congregation—can be challenging and may cause, from time to time, no small amount of apprehension. It is only through persistence, diligence, and prayer that one can hope to successfully navigate the waters of our chosen vocation.



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## *in tempo*

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**Hymnal Abbreviations:**

ELW: *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

LSB: *Lutheran Service Book*

CW: *Christian Worship*

It would not come as a surprise, given this context, if we were to feel pressured by the demands and expectations of our calling. After all, assimilating these diverse fields of knowledge—their lingos, techniques, and modalities—into our craft can be the daunting work of a lifetime. Having said as much, let us reassure our readers by interjecting a short and salutary disclaimer. It is not our goal to stir anxieties but to pique curiosity and arouse the imagination. We would merely like to scratch the surface of yet another field to which the usually enthusiastic—if occasionally overextended—mettle of our protean church musician must be brought to bear: the realm of beauty.

Notice we did not say “the realm of aesthetics,” that last word first coined by the German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in 1735, derived from a Greek term referring to what is perceptible to the senses. Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the theory and interpretation of the beautiful in every sphere of life, which is not the same as the

Beautiful, which is beyond the cognitive and above the senses: it is a window into the transcendent. As Roger Scruton says in his superb book *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*, “Beauty can be consoling ... exhilarating, appealing, inspiring, chilling. It can affect us in an unlimited variety of ways. Yet it is never viewed with indifference.”<sup>1</sup> In its capacity to reorganize our priorities, the Beautiful is transformational. This short article is interested in sketching the sacramental dimension of beauty and the useful paradigm for ministry that emerges in its wake.



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**Actions and objects can be sacramental as well to the extent in which “invisible things themselves are honored in them.”**

Let us backtrack a bit and take a look at the definition of a sacrament. “An outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace” is the elegant reworking of St. Augustine’s words made by the Council of Trent in the mid-1600s in the Tridentine Creed. The Bishop of Hippo, several centuries prior, had used a more casual tone: “the signs of divine things are, it is true, visible, ... but invisible things themselves are honored in them.”<sup>2</sup> As any first-year Divinity student will remind us, the Christian sacraments have their particular meaning and efficacy because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As it stands, the definition cited above is not specific enough, since it can accommodate signs outside the metaphorical and literal walls of the church: the phrase “instituted by Jesus Christ” is missing from this formulation. Those words came about as part of the Wittenberg Concord in 1536. Translated from the Latin, this document tells us, “Nothing has the character of a sacrament apart from the use instituted by Christ.” God’s self-communication comes to us in the Scriptures and also in the form of water and bread, baptism and eucharist, font and altar—but not exclusively. While doctrine can precisely define what a sacrament is, actions and objects can be sacramental

as well to the extent in which “invisible things themselves are honored in them.”

This symbolic substitution brings us to the definition of “sign.” A sign can be either “an object, a quality, or an event, whose presence or occurrence indicates the probable presence or occurrence of something else” (as defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*). Perhaps this is the sense in which the Fourth Evangelist recounts Jesus’ miracles in his Book of Signs (John 1:19—12:50): as intimations of the New Creation fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. One may suspect Martin Luther used the same analogical strategy when he said the Scriptures are the “cradle wherein Christ is laid.”<sup>3</sup> Scriptures, creation, and even the life of Jesus become pointers, symbols, and icons of the Alpha and Omega, the Author and Source of beauty itself.

As creatures made in the likeness and image of God and as co-participants in God’s creative nature, is it not incumbent upon us to discern what happens to our signs when they fail to point to the immaterial and transcendent? As the 2006 Pontifical Council for Culture states with grand rhetorical flair in its concluding document, when a “*person risks falling into the trap of beauty taken for itself—the icon becomes the idol*,” the means that swallow the end, truth that imprisons, trap into which people fall, due to an inadequate



ISTOCK/JASMINA007





Above and verso at right: Jatson Nyinpo (1585-1656)  
 Eastern Tibet, 19th century  
 Pigments on cloth  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 Gift of Shelley and Donald Rubin  
 C2006.66.556 (HAR 1035)



PHOTOGRAPHED BY ASYA GROVITS

The second Buddha (left) and the other side of the painting, as seen through a tablet, Rubin Museum of Art, New York City.

formation in the senses and the lack of a proper education regarding beauty.<sup>4</sup> As we can see, the direction of the signs we use or create matters a great deal.

Under this light, the Arts' very nature as an untethered and autonomous domain of human creativity can become a hindrance. It is not too dissimilar to what free radicals are in chemistry: highly reactive and short-lived molecules. Aesthetic "free radicals" behave the same way in worship: all the performative aspects of worship (spoken word, music, visual arts, liturgical dance, and architecture), if they are to function sacramentally, must resemble the icon in its revelatory capacity. If any artistic endeavor or object is to be called sacramental, it needs to transport us to the realm of what Rudolf Otto called "the numinous."<sup>5</sup>

In other words, in the icon we are hurled into what lies beyond it. It is in this "beyond" that we may become aware of the transcendent. The opposite of the icon is the idol, which points to itself and says, "look at me!" In the idol, we are confronted with a truncated and diminished reality, one that is self-referential and robs us of the opportunity to encounter "the Other." In short, the icon is fertile; the idol, sterile. If we are not alert, signs can change their function and go from icon to idol without us realizing it. Our invitation today is for us cantors to spend more time observing and discerning the direction of our signs.

## Epilogue

Last summer I had a chance to visit the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City. There I saw a painting of the second Buddha, the person responsible for bringing Buddhism from India to Tibet. Asked to use a tablet to observe—through the technology of enhanced reality—visitors were able to see what was on the other side of the painting: a short prayer and the painted and hidden hands of the artist, suspended in an open gesture of benediction toward the viewer.

I am not sure how to explain what I felt, but for a few minutes I experienced an overwhelming surge of gratitude: this painting provided a sense of openness and connection that took me out of myself—an epiphany. The experience allowed me to understand that once beauty moves into the realm of the sacramental, it allows us to shed the anesthetic familiarity that makes us not see the world for what it really is: a gift, a miracle, and a blessing.



Omaldo Perez is an ALCM board member and is music director and organist at Zoar

Lutheran in Perrysburg, OH.

## Endnotes

1. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), xi.
2. De Cat. Rud. 26.50.
3. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American edition, *Word and Sacrament I*, vol. 35, ed. Theodore Bachman (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 236.
4. Pontifical Council for Culture, "Concluding Document of the Plenary Assembly: The Via Pulchritudinis: Privileged Pathway for Evangelisation and Dialogue," [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/cultr/documents/rc\\_pc\\_cultr\\_doc\\_20060327\\_plenary-assembly\\_final-document\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_cultr_doc_20060327_plenary-assembly_final-document_en.html) (emphasis added).
5. A term popularized in Otto's book *Das Heilige* (Breslau: Trewendt und Granier, 1917).

# Connecting the Bench and the Pew

by John R. Paradowski

I was 11 years old when I started leading worship from the organ bench. I grew up in the Catholic tradition where we sang four hymns every Sunday and only two stanzas of each.

There was nothing at this church that made the music special. I scheduled the hymns and liturgy because that is what we did, and I played the notes. When I was 15 years old, I took a second organist job at a local Lutheran church (playing Catholic on Saturdays and Lutheran on Sundays). This opened the world of great hymnody to me, a world of new melodies and hymn texts that as a teenager I didn't fully understand. I immersed myself in it and loved learning these "new" hymns. A number of them I even took back to the Catholic church.

There is a spice company that touts the motto, "Love People. Cook Them Tasty Food." I love that thought for two reasons. One, I myself like tasty food, and two, it made me think: "Love Your People. Play Them Tasty Music." To me this means share music that engages them in meaningful ways.

As organists we sit on our benches and use the mechanics and electrical components of a machine to provide life-filled music to enhance and engage the congregations we serve. As musicians we should always

**Organ hymn playing is not a recital but rather a foundation and encouragement for robust and spiritual singing.**

strive to make music, to bring the notes and the text off the printed page into the hearts and souls of those who listen and sing.

"What we need now is fewer organists and more musicians who play the organ."—Healey Willan<sup>1</sup>

Hymn-playing is the church organist's bread-and-butter task. We do it every week without thinking much about it. Congregations are inspired to sing more enthusiastically when accompanied or led by confident and unambiguous organ accompaniments, skillfully registered and articulated to match the church service context and acoustics. Organ hymn playing is not a recital but rather a foundation and encouragement for robust and spiritual singing.

Loving your people is about making a connection and about being the best you can be for them. Making the connection from notes on a page to the keys we push down to the sounds coming from our instruments to the ears of those near and then into the hearts and souls of our community can take quite

a path. But if we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us, we will be able to connect, with love, to the people we lead in worship.

How can we make that connection between the bench and the pew to bring alive the hymns we love to play and share with our congregations?

- Establish a tempo and tactus.
- Articulate clearly.
- Foster synchronicity of leader and congregation (entrainment).

## Tempo and Tactus

Picture this: you're playing a hymn when suddenly something goes off the rails: the congregation is not singing together. Could it be that the choir director is slowing down the choir, or the pastors are singing into the microphone at their own tempo, or a loud congregation member is singing stanza three when you are on stanza two? Been there? Done that?

As musicians, we know to follow the phrases and weavings of the musical line in our repertoire. One would never stand in front of the choir beating four beats in a row while never engaging word inflections or bigger musical patterns and then expect the choir to sing musically. Love your people by allowing them the best chance to engage in the song. That means, find the natural tempo for the gathered assembly in the

space. Love them by allowing the congregation to find the musical line, letting them breathe, and highlighting the text as needed. Love them by conforming to the space, acoustics, and community: don't force the congregation to a place they don't want to go. Bend where necessary and lead as needed.

## Tactus (Heartbeat) and Tempo (Speed)

Many hymns do not have time signatures. Why? you may ask. That is so the worship leader does not get trapped into the feeling that a hymn must be 3 or 4 beats per measure. Depending on the space, instrumentation, congregation, and tempo, you may want to feel 4 or 2 or even 1 beat per measure. The larger the tactus space, the more forward motion the hymn singing will have. Consequently, you may start turning your

congregation into a unified choir and not a hundred or so individual singers.

HYMN TO JOY ("Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" [ELW 836, LSB 803])

Figure 1: do you feel four beats per measure? Two? Or one? Sing through each tactus feeling and notice how the flow of the hymn changes.

FREU DICH SEHR ("Comfort, Comfort Now My People" [ELW 256, LSB 347, CW 11])

Figure 2: more complicated, but the text helps drive this pattern of bigger strong beats.

Ein feste Burg ("A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" [ELW 503; LSB 656; CW 200])

Figure 3: the relationship of 2 and 3 beats is present, you just have to find it.

## Leading Hymns and Articulation

Your articulation will always need to be adjusted depending on the space you are in, the gathered congregation, and the style and mood of the hymn. Remember these key elements of articulation:

- melody notes on strong beats need more articulation;
- inner harmonies can be tied over notes; and
- the time between stanzas allows your congregation to breathe. Whatever you decide, be musical and consistent.

## Musical Phrases

There are times when you need to make musical vs. textual compromises. Whatever you decide, it is good to have a musical solution to bring forth the text in the best manner.

For example; in the second half of the second stanza of "Praise to the Lord" (ELW 858, 859; LSB 790; CW 234), the musical phrase has a break but the text phrase needs to connect. Figure 4: do you break or not? Knowing that the congregation will take a breath at that point, I would not do a full break but instead bridge the gap by playing moving quarter/eighth notes connecting the musical phrases together. Hopefully, even with the congregation taking a breath, they will sense that the two phrases are textually connected.

Whatever you decide when balancing music vs. textual phrases, know that striving to do your best and being aware of these situations shows that

Figure 1.

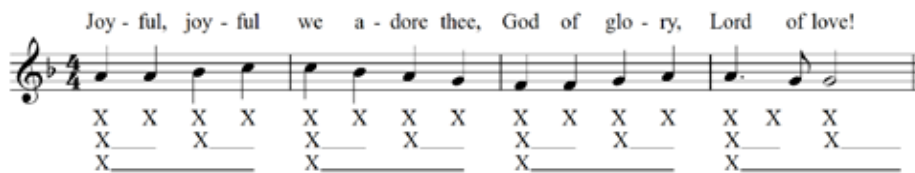


Figure 2.



Figure 3.



you care about the people who are proclaiming the message in song.

## Entrainment with the Congregation

Entrainment, in the biomusical sense, refers to the synchronization of bodies to an external perceived rhythm, such as in music.

We strive for entrainment with all our musical ensembles in rehearsal and in the service. How awesome is it when we, as directors, can fall back and allow the ensembles to make music as a whole without us getting in the way? The ebb and flow of phrases and breathing together just naturally happen. Then we as directors know when to engage and when to stay out of the way. When music links and engages us, we realize we are not alone in this world. Together we have a common experience at that moment.

Figure 4.



When you love someone you trust them, sometimes with your life. That deep trust and deep love need to exist also between you and your gathered people. They always need to trust you as the servant-leader to be there for them, to support, to guide, and to uphold them in their proclaiming the message through song.

If we, as worship leaders, are trapped in the mode of just "playing the notes," we do a disservice to our congregations. Our job is not to be the spirit in the music but to allow the Holy Spirit to enter through the music. When the Holy Spirit engages us all, we become one voice proclaiming the great love of the Creator who sent Jesus

to show us that Love has come to stay. Our goal is to bring the word of God to life in the hearts and minds of our congregations through God's gift of music and through the talent God has given us.

Your assignment: think about how you will share and engage your congregation with your music by first loving them.



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in Wauwatosa, WI.

### Endnote

1. As quoted in Alec Wyton, "Healey Willan's Musical London [interview]," *Music: The A.G.O. Magazine* 2 (January 1968): 32.

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# Budgeting for a Well-Appointed Church Music

by Michael Krentz

**m**usic or money: which would you rather discuss with ministry colleagues, worship committee members, people on the congregation council, or choir members? For a congregation to have a vibrant music ministry we must discuss music; but we are also obligated to talk about money. Even J. S. Bach found it necessary in 1730 to submit to the Leipzig town council a *Short but Most Necessary Draft for a Well-Appointed Church Music: With Certain Modest Reflections on the Decline of the Same*.<sup>1</sup>

There are two general principles I have used in the course of my calling as a cantor, in multiple settings.

1. Since worship is central to the church and since music is central to worship, it is the responsibility of a congregation (or college/seminary, district/synod, or other institution that engages in worship) to provide the necessary resources for an appropriate music ministry.

2. Since there are people with the “gift” of special interest in music together with financial capability, and since music ministries typically have expenses that are not “regular” or easy to budget, opportunity exists for people with means to support music in the church.

The important thing is to identify what items belong in which category.

## For a congregation to have a vibrant music ministry we must discuss music; but we are also obligated to talk about money.

It is also important to recognize that no two congregations are the same, with the same expectations for music in worship. Thus, every congregation is unique when it comes to how they budget for music in their setting.

Beyond compensation that is just (with appropriate benefits) for musicians who are paid to lead music, congregations should also budget for items like the following. (Note that this list is not exhaustive; a very helpful budget checklist can be found here: [https://www.morningstarmusic.com/pdf/90-32\\_BudgetChecklist.pdf](https://www.morningstarmusic.com/pdf/90-32_BudgetChecklist.pdf)).<sup>2</sup>

■ **New music:** every musician needs to learn new music. You may need choral music, worship ensemble music, handbell music, solo vocal music, instrumental music. In a previous parish I discerned that the oldest children/youth choir and the adult choir needed to sing about 1/3 new music each year; “your results may vary.” Costs can be held down by using free downloadable music available on sites such as cpdl.org or imslp.org.

■ **Instrument maintenance:** every musician needs appropriate instruments to make good music. A pipe organ needs to be tuned at least two or three times a year; a piano used regularly in worship or rehearsal two to four times. Be sure to build in a little extra for routine repairs, like a cipher in the organ or a sticky key on the piano.

■ **Guest musicians:** volunteer musicians in our ensembles deserve the joy of singing or playing with more than the piano, organ, or typical worship ensemble. If your parish does not have such people in its membership, a budget to bring musicians in (especially for festivals) is enriching.

■ **Copyright fees:** all musicians should be aware of issues around copyright. But we cannot expect our members also to be aware.

■ **Operating costs:** These include all the other costs you might have in your music ministry. Examples include music filing boxes, CDs, stamps, stationary, thank you notes, and getting the choir robes cleaned.

Beyond these expenses, which are routine (yearly) and relatively predictable, your music ministry might include things that fall outside the usual Sunday morning worship pattern or that are unpredictable as to

their cost. Items like these present excellent opportunities for people who want to support your music with a special gift. Such gifts should not replace the congregation's responsibility to support its music. Rather, they should be for things that are "above and beyond" the usual.

These could include:

- a concert or concert series: in addition to paying for musicians, publicity, and food for receptions, such a series might require more frequent organ or piano tunings;
- choir trips or retreats: singers might pay their costs, but the congregation should cover the expenses of the director and any chaperones;
- purchase of new choir robes or new pads and covers for the handbell tables;

- commissioning a new anthem or hymn text for a church anniversary;
- purchase of a new, large choral collection that would cost too much for any one year's budget;
- upgrades to the worship ensemble's sound system; and
- major repairs/rebuilding or replacement of a keyboard, piano, set of handbells, or organ. In my current call we budget \$1000 each year for organ maintenance, which goes into a special fund that grows over time. This helps us with major repairs when they become necessary.

To manage such expenses and gifts, it is helpful to establish a dedicated music fund or two. Be sure to work with your church treasurer as you think about such things and keep careful

accounting of all gifts and expenses.

We all wish for a "well-appointed church music" where we serve. By engaging about both music and money, we can help that become a reality in our places of ministry.

Soli Deo Gloria!



Michael Krentz is secretary/treasurer for ALCM and director of music at Christ

Lutheran Church in Allentown, PA.

### Endnotes

1. Oliver Strunk, ed., *Source Readings in Music History*, rev. edition ed. Leo Treitler (New York: Norton, 1998), 565.
2. A helpful book about the "nonmusic" parts of a musician's work is C. Randall Bradley, *From Postlude to Prelude: Music Ministry's Other Six Days*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: MorningStar, 2015).



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# Light Dawns on a Hymn Festival Near You

by Emily Bruflat

**I**n your community, how often do you go above and beyond musically? Maybe you work for a very large church with multiple choirs and ensembles of various ages. Or perhaps you are a part-time organist and/or director for a very small church and feel grateful to have a handful of folks show up for choir on Sunday. Wherever your church falls on the spectra of size and involvement, a hymn festival *is* possible for your context and can enhance worship in meaningful ways.

At its core, a hymn festival takes an idea or a theme—for example, a church holiday or a community celebration—and expands on it with music, readings, reflections, and anything else that fits the occasion. Hymn festivals can take many forms, but two main types will be discussed in this article: community hymn festivals and hymn festival worship services.

Union Presbyterian Church in Saint Peter, MN, hosts a hymn festival every two or three years; in 2018 they chose justice and peace as the overarching themes. The guest artist was given license to create a program, and after much planning and research a theme of “Bring Peace to Earth Again: Musical Reflections for Justice” was developed. This festival was scheduled for a Sunday afternoon and was free and open

**Hymn festivals allow for extra creativity in the execution of congregational song.**

to the public, so it falls into the community hymn festival category. The church provided a choir of around 20 voices and a small but mighty Hendrickson organ with 11 ranks.

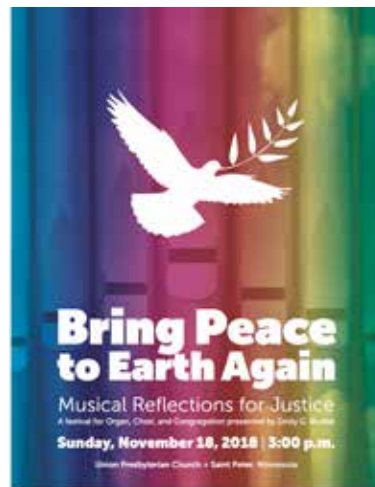
“Bring Peace to Earth Again” was built around the idea of a crescendo from despair to hope. To paint this picture, the publicity teaser on the church’s Facebook page drew from some of the music and Scriptures of the program:

O God of mercy, hear our prayer. Our world is hurting. Our country is divided. Someone’s cryin’, Lord.

And yet, a light shines in the darkness. Jesus, the radical teacher, came to lead by example. We are called to love our enemies, to care for the sick, to extend hospitality to the stranger, to live together in harmony, to overcome evil with good.

O God, whose heart compassionate bears every human pain, redeem this violent, wounded world till gentleness shall reign. O God of mercy, hear our prayer: Bring peace to earth again!  
- Herman Stuempfle Jr.

You are invited to take the journey from darkness and lament to light and hope.



The hymn festival was structured into four subtopics to take the listener on this worshipful journey: “we were in darkness,” “we were sent a savior,” “we were instructed,” and “we were commissioned.” Each subtopic included Scripture readings, anthems, hymns, and a lay speaker offering a reflection based on the texts provided.

This particular program began with a choir anthem—Uzee Brown’s “Come By Here”—and was followed by the congregation singing a hymn version of Psalm 9, “Why Stand So Far Away, My God” (MORNING SONG or CONSOLATION), and then by a reading from the book of Job.

Hymn festivals allow for extra creativity in the execution of congregational song. For example, toward the end of the program, the choir and congregation sang two (abbreviated) hymns in alternation by stanza. “What Is the World Like,” a

**The purpose of the hymn festival was to be a gift of high-quality music-making to the Saint Peter community.**

beautiful text by Adam M. Tice, was set to the tune SLANE, and this was paired with the familiar Jeffery Rowthorn text “Lord, You Give the Great Commission,” set to JOYOUS LIGHT. Stanza one of the former was followed by stanza one of the latter and so on. The two texts and tunes worked very well in alternation, and there are likely many such pairs yet to be discovered.

The 70-minute program concluded with Michael Burkhardt’s arrangement of “Light Dawns on a Weary World,” with organ, choir, and congregation; everyone in the room echoed *shalom* as a final blessing and prayer for the world.

In the context of Union Presbyterian, the purpose of the hymn festival was to be a gift

of high-quality music-making to the Saint Peter community, with a memorial fund created in memory of a very musically involved member. In this author’s context, an afternoon program such as this likely would have been a “Music for Missions” event, where freewill donations would have been collected for a local or Lutheran charity.

Conversely, a hymn festival worship service can be similar in its focus on music as the central means of proclamation, but it can be as simple as following the lectionary texts and adding extra hymns and keeping most or all other elements of your context’s worship.

For example, an Epiphany program titled “Wondrous Star, Lend Thy Light” was

**A hymn festival worship service can be ... as simple as following the lectionary texts and adding extra hymns.**



structured around most of the appointed Epiphany readings. To illustrate: the gospel reading became its own subsection and this portion included two hymns, a reflection from the pastor (one of three reflections in the festival, each about one-third of the length of a typical sermon), and a litany with congregational responses.

A small handbell ensemble, a vocal octet, the Sunday school children, a trumpeter, and a flutist assisted musically with this service, but all “extras” are optional and are based on your specific context. The order of worship was creatively altered to suit the occasion, and this Epiphany hymn festival was celebrated with about a month of planning (as opposed to about a year for the community hymn festival described above).

Whether you have a single organist and a few willing volunteers or scores of lay people assisting each Sunday, you can use hymn festivals to creatively enhance worship. May your hymn festivals inspire others to put faith into action in service to God and neighbor!.



Elmily Bruflat is cantor of First Lutheran Church in Saint Peter, MN.

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# Keeping It Fresh with a Small Choir

by Nicole Moritz

**f**or the last 12 years I've been directing a small choir in an LCMS church. I have varying numbers of sopranos and altos. Sometimes I only have one or two men. Often that necessitates finding music written in two or three parts and sometimes adapting an SATB anthem to fit our needs. Fear not: a small choir can still sound great, and you can still perform an impressive variety of choral pieces. It only requires some imagination and open-mindedness on the part of both director and choir.

Recently we restructured the choir schedule to meet our current needs. With several retirees and a few pressed-for-time young parents, the rehearsal time has been moved to Saturday mornings, which seems to be a better time of day for learning than late in the evening. The choir also sings less often than previously, which ensures that choir members are eager to sing on the "big" festival dates such as Easter or Christmas.

## Vocal Technique

Keep in mind that continually teaching and reteaching basic vocal production techniques is a must, especially with



**You can perform an impressive variety of choral pieces. It only requires some imagination and open-mindedness.**

turnover in the choir. You may acquire some members whose music-reading skills are minimal or who haven't had much experience singing in an ensemble. Even long-term choir members tend to revert to past habits if you don't remind them: "tall" vowels make a noticeable difference in the sound! Make sure each choir member sings the same vowel: different vowels can bend the pitch, causing the choir to be out of tune. Blend is important with a small ensemble since the voices are more exposed—especially when singing in unison.

**Pilgrim Lutheran Choir is small in size but mighty in song.**

## Repurpose Your SATBs

Sometimes you can still use an SATB setting if it's adaptable to the choir. When reviewing pieces to adapt, be sure that the ranges fit the voice parts you have in mind. Some SATB pieces can be adapted by picking out the melody as a solo or unison, using only soprano/tenor or alto/bass and using the accompanying instrument to fill in the harmonies. Some SATB gems are written very simply and only go to four parts in limited sections or ending

**Continually teaching and reteaching basic vocal production techniques is a must, especially with turnover in the choir.**



cadences—these are wonderful for learning quickly. Keep an eye out for those in your reading sessions.

### Instrumental Descants and Embellishments

If you have instrumentalists in your congregation, don't hesitate to invite them to join you. Many choral settings already include a C- or B-instrument part or percussion. If they don't, you may have the option of writing your own or letting an instrumentalist improvise. Perhaps you have a C-instrument part that you'd like transposed for a B-flat instrument: music-notation software such as Finale or Sibelius allows you to transpose a part effortlessly.

### Improvisational Embellishment

Percussion is likely the easiest to improvise. A tambourine used on a piece with a Renaissance or Middle Eastern flavor adds instant panache: all you need is an ostinato rhythm. Handbells

and choir chimes are another possibility: one or two bells on the downbeat or offbeat can give a dramatic finish.

### Foreign Languages

Just because you have fewer folks in the choir doesn't mean you can't sing pieces in languages besides English—famous Latin texts such as *O Magnum Mysterium* also come in two- and three-part settings; you really can “travel the world” from the choir loft. Don't forget about those great Spanish-language hymns in *LSB* and *ELW*! Get the choir to sing a stanza or two in Spanish. It's a great way to experiment with sound, mouth shapes, and vocal production in pursuit of the “holy grail” of a uniform choral sound. Even if you feel slightly intimidated by non-English texts, there is likely a sound file readily available via the internet from any current publisher that you may play for your choir.

If you haven't already, try programming a “German Christmas” or a “Spanish Carols” special. Most of the material might be sung in English, but singing one or two in another language lends a dash of authenticity. When I throw in a non-English anthem, I always include a translation in the bulletin so that all can appreciate the meaning.

### Just Add Congregation!

This approach invites everyone to be part of the choir. Large concertato settings may require adaptation, but you can create your own “arrangement” by printing stanzas in the bulletin for the congregation to sing along with the choir, using

**Just because you have fewer folks in the choir doesn't mean you can't sing pieces in languages besides English.**

familiar words and music, giving you the instant gratification of a full, rich sound. The inclusivity of this approach is warm and welcoming, appreciated by musicians and nonmusicians alike. Don't forget that you can achieve even more variety by separating out high and low voices, using different sections of the congregation for an antiphonal effect (e.g., pulpit side vs. lectern side), assigning a soprano descant on a final stanza, or even attempting singing in rounds.

### Suggestion Box

If you're still coming up dry, ask for ideas from others including your pastor, choir members, and congregants.



Nicole Moritz is music director for Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa, WI.

**Create your own “arrangement” by printing stanzas in the bulletin for the congregation to sing along with the choir, giving you the instant gratification of a full, rich sound.**

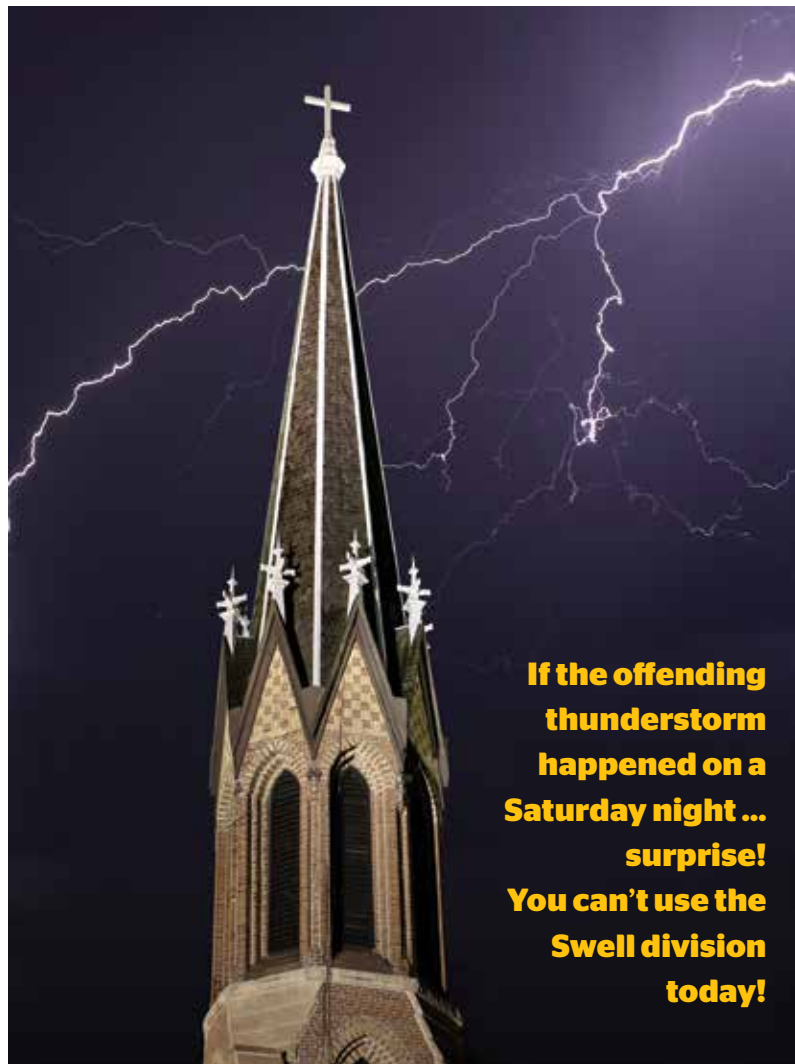


# Your Pipe Organ and Insurance

**I**s your church's pipe organ adequately insured? It's an important question. In the past few years, several of the organs Muller Pipe Organ Company maintains have suffered damage from roof leaks. As is often the case, the leather in the organ mechanism was damaged by the water, which in turn caused dead notes and ciphers. It is a frustrating discovery to be sure—especially if the offending thunderstorm happened on a Saturday night. Surprise! You can't use the Swell division today!

When the unexpected happens, repair costs can vary widely. Minor damage might require only an hour or so for repairs. Major damage might necessitate the removal of an entire division for cleaning and replacement of damaged components.

We always recommend that the organ be insured at full replacement cost, not depreciated value. Ideally, the coverage should carry a cost-of-living rider so that the value is automatically increased each year. Prior to contacting your insurance agent, check with your organ technician to determine the estimated replacement cost of the instrument. The insurance company may ask for a description of the organ. This might include the year the organ was installed, the builder, and the number of manuals and ranks. You should also confirm whether the insurance policy treats the organ as part of the



**If the offending thunderstorm happened on a Saturday night ... surprise! You can't use the Swell division today!**

ISTOCK/RA SILJA

building or as contents, so that the value can be added to the appropriate coverage.

Whether the damage is from rain, lightning, fire, or vandalism, repairs can be quite extensive. I encourage you to reach out to your insurance company to confirm that you are ready for the worst. If possible, it may be advisable to work with a church-related insurance company that will better understand the issues concerning pipe organs; other

insurance companies may be less knowledgeable in this area.



Luke Tegtmeier holds degrees in church music from Valparaiso University and Luther

Seminary. For 10 years he was a church musician in Minnesota. Since 2015 he has worked for Muller Pipe Organ Company near Columbus, OH. He welcomes your questions or comments: [luke@mullerpipeorgan.com](mailto:luke@mullerpipeorgan.com).

# LCMS Online Worship Resources

by William C. Weedon

**t**he Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) offers a variety of resources to aid Lutheran musicians and congregations in appropriating the riches of our liturgical and hymnological inheritance in an ever-deeper and more joyous way. Naturally, much is keyed to *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)*. Below is a brief description (with URLs) to some of what is available.

## LetUsPray

This resource provides a suggested prayer of the church for each Sunday and major festival, with the petitions arising out of the language used in that Sunday's lectionary readings (using the three-year or one-year lectionary option). The prayers are available in Microsoft Word for easy editing and shaping to the needs of the local eucharistic assembly:

- three-year lectionary option: <https://www.lcms.org/worship/three-year-series-prayers>
- one-year lectionary option: <https://www.lcms.org/worship/one-year-series-prayers>

## Lectionary Summaries

These summaries provide brief introductions to the mystery of Christ that is proclaimed on a given Lord's Day, feast, or festival based on the assigned lectionary. These little paragraphs are designed to be included in the Sunday bulletin: <https://www.lcms.org/worship/lectionary-summaries>.

## Chant Aid

Admit it: you've cringed on the organ bench a time or two when you've heard a pastor butcher a preface or other chant. We have just what you need to share with them; they'll thank you!

- learn to chant the preface for Advent and Christmas from *LSB*: <https://blogs.lcms.org/2013/pastors-learn-to-chant-the-prefaces-for-advent-and-christmas/>
- learn to chant the Good Friday Reproaches from *LSB*: <https://blogs.lcms.org/2017/audio-reproaches-from-good-friday-liturgy-in-lutheran-service-book/>
- learn to chant the Easter Vigil Service of Light from *LSB*: <https://blogs.lcms.org/2014/exsultet-and-the-preface-for-the-great-vigil-of-easter-audio/>

## LSB Liturgy Audio Files

When teaching an unfamiliar setting of the Divine Service or the Daily Office, nothing helps like being able to send the congregation to a place to hear and learn it through repetition. Check out the recordings offered here: [https://m.box.com/shared\\_item/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.box.com%2Fs%2Fofosx8q3s3](https://m.box.com/shared_item/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.box.com%2Fs%2Fofosx8q3s3).

## Organ Instruction

"But I don't know how to play the organ!" How many pianists have protested thus when being pressed into service on the organ bench. Musician Kevin

Hildebrand has some outstanding help to explore and use the organ when coming from basic keyboard: <https://www.lcms.org/worship/church-music/organ-instruction>.

## Suggested Propers for a Service of Prayer for the Persecuted Church

Here are complete resources for observing a Divine Service in prayer for our sisters and brothers in Christ who face persecution for the sake of their confession of Christ Jesus: <https://www.lcms.org/Documentfdoc?src=lcm&id=3293>.

## LSB Church Year Calendars

When is Easter this year? Or Pentecost? Or Christmas? Ha, that last one's easy. But for the rest, check out this handy little calendar with the church year and its readings: <https://www.lcms.org/worship/church-year>.

## Kids in the Divine Service (English or Spanish)

This resource is a beautifully updated version of the classic intro to life in the liturgy by Pr. Christopher Thoma. It's offered here in either color or black and white and in either English or Spanish. What a great way to introduce the younger set to the riches of the way we pray together and gather around pulpit, font, and altar: <https://www.lcms.org/worship/youth-in-worship>.

# WELS Hymnal Project Update

## The Word in Song: Hymn of the Day Studies

These are ideal for unpacking the theological and biblical richness of the chief hymn of each Divine Service. These reproducible sheets can be used in Bible classes or simply as musician preparation at home: <https://blogs.lcms.org/tag/unwrapping-the-gifts/>.

## Thanksgiving Table Grace

This is a beautiful addition to your Thanksgiving meal, bringing the prayer and song of the church to our earthly tables and to the First Article gifts that God richly blesses us with each day: <https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=7eAzDyqwPnukhfR1aJejuXvfFZEdHX1x>.

## Brief Advent Table Devotions

Here's a way to observe the lighting of the Advent candles and allow the light of the promises in God's Word to shine at our family tables: <https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=nh94JvqgUQ57JZEIkhFdgma0jWlcOWR7>.

## Unwrapping the Gifts

All of this and even more is readily accessible and, best of all, free to all, at this URL. Explore a bit. You'll find lots of goodies: <https://blogs.lcms.org/tag/unwrapping-the-gifts/>.



William C. Weedon serves two roles at the LCMS International Center (IC): as the synod's director of worship and as the IC chaplain.

I was sitting at my desk thinking about how much hymns meant to me and my family. They are accessible. They are a comfort. They can be unique or quite traditional. You can hum them to babies as you rock them to sleep. You can sing them with elderly shut-ins who may have lost their sight but haven't lost their desire to praise God in song. Or, if you were my late great-uncle, you'd sing "Onward Christian Soldiers" as you showered and got ready in the morning.

The WELS Hymnal Project Committee has recently provided updates from the subcommittees. Here are some highlights. (If you'd like further information or would like to read the updates in depth, you can find more at [www.welshymnal.com/blog](http://www.welshymnal.com/blog).)

### Rites Committee:

- three musical settings for the main communion service;
- new daily devotion options;
- expanded set of personal prayers;
- revised versions of the wedding rite and funeral service;
- proposed new service for midweek Lenten and Advent services or other midweek services without communion;
- revised rites for confession and absolution.

### Technology Committee:

- continuation of its main three objectives:
  - a service builder application for pastors and worship planners;
  - a resource for musicians and directors;
  - a mobile application for laypeople;
- oversight of the visual design of the new hymnal as well as the business model for software development.

### Psalmody Committee:

- all psalm settings selected and being prepared for publication; psalm settings include responsorial single-tone (current settings) and double-tone arrangements or metrical paraphrases;
- a new WELS psalter that will include at least two settings for all 150 psalms.

### Executive Committee:

- over 8,000 responses received as feedback on which hymns to cut or save (feedback ended in May 2018);
- twenty hymns were "saved." (For the full list, please visit the blog.)



Jennifer Wolf is a PR specialist who has taught at Wisconsin Lutheran College in Milwaukee, WI. She is a layperson in the pew at St. John's in Wauwatosa, WI.



# on volunteer management

## Guiding Volunteers

by Allison M. Schweitzer

**L**aw, gospel. Law, gospel. Perhaps some readers have glommed on to my writing strategy on this volunteer management topic.

The last piece I wrote was titled “Firing Volunteers.” That term—to *fire* someone—is rarely even used in common workplace culture anymore because of how strong and emotionally damaging it can be.

So ... did you get the message?

Telling (or even inferring to) volunteers that they are no longer welcome in a particular role within the church *is* emotionally damaging, if not susceptible to leaving a lifelong scar.

At the close of my article in the fall 2018 edition of *in tempo* I asked for feedback on the topic of firing volunteers. Fran Morton of New Jersey took me up on this; her letter to the editor is included following this piece. I encourage you all to read it carefully, as it is well written and well thought-out. Thank you, Fran!

**Telling (or even inferring to) volunteers that they are no longer welcome in a particular role within the church is emotionally damaging, if not susceptible to leaving a lifelong scar.**



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### Before You Make Any Moves

The first article I wrote for *in tempo* was on setting expectations for volunteers. Should you find yourself in the situation where you’ve got a problematic volunteer or two, I personally believe it is crucial to go back to your own messaging and ensure you have done everything possible to make extremely clear what is expected of your musicians/volunteers.

- Do you have an attendance policy in place or is it just assumed that you don’t miss “too much” when it comes to rehearsals or services? How much is “too much”?
- Do you have a rule about the use of phones in rehearsals?
- Do you offer opportunities for extra help if a choir member is not feeling secure on a part, even after rehearsing it?
- Do you have expectations about excessive talking in rehearsals?

- Does your church have standards regarding how volunteers treat or interact with other volunteers?
- Do you offer opportunities for feedback from ensemble members, in case there are issues within the ensemble that you might not be aware of? (Sometimes choir members can be driven crazy and eventually out of the group because of the actions of another member, unbeknownst to the director.)

Some of these expectations may be completely unnecessary for your ensemble (and, admittedly, the majority of choirs that I direct are youth, so yes, I have rules about phones and excessive talking). However, should new members join who don’t have much experience in a church choir environment, they may not know what is acceptable versus not. Put it all out there in advance—you will be glad you did so, in the long run.

## What If One of Your Volunteers Is Not Meeting Expectations?

- Remind them of what the expectations are. It is possible he or she has just plain forgotten.
- I like to gauge the reaction of other choir members to said problematic volunteer. If you work with a small ensemble, this person may really be bringing down morale. Or the others may say, “oh, that’s just how Bob is,” and laugh it off. Can you also laugh it off?
- Is he or she causing a lot of extra stress and/or work for you? Talk with your pastor about steps on how to proceed. It’s possible additional guidance, beyond what we as church musicians are trained to do, is warranted.

## Define “Church Music Volunteer”

Within the field of church music, as we all know, there are many different hats one could wear: choir director, organist, handbell choir director, brass choir director, praise band leader, cantor, composer, arranger, and so on and so forth. There are just as many, if not more, volunteer musician positions!

Depending on what the volunteer musician is doing, varying levels of musicianship may be required. It is quite possible that you have a musician meeting every expectation you’ve made from the volunteer perspective—but musically, they are just

not there. This is a much more delicate situation that requires a different level of guidance.

- Are you doing everything possible to get music out in advance, so that proper practice and preparation can take place on their part?
- Is the volunteer musician aware of the inaccuracy?
- Have you had a chance to go over parts one-on-one, so that you can discover why the inaccuracies may be happening?
- Is the volunteer musician causing a lot of extra stress and/or work for you? Again, talk with your pastor about steps on how to proceed. It’s possible additional guidance, beyond what we as church musicians are trained to do, is warranted.

We church musicians ... are so much more than just that! *Thank you* and God bless all of you not only for the music you bring to our beloved Lutheran worship but also for the relationships you cultivate and manage. It is truly a calling that only certain people can understand!



Allison Schweitzer is assistant director of church and school music at Mt. Olive

Lutheran Church and School in Milwaukee, WI.

**Up until the latest issue of *in tempo***, the topics and approaches espoused in ALCM publications have been what I’m accustomed to seeing from other denominations. However, my eye as well as my experience and convictions stumbled over two articles in the last 2018 issue. Neither of these, I believe, help us develop and foster healthy, inclusive music programs in our churches.

“Incorporating Professional Musicians into Your Church Ensembles”—in my experience, this article starts from a false premise: that the professional musician is a novice in areas of music not directly related to their profession. Rather, I have found any number of brass players who were also fine singers and singers who were fine pianists (as an example). Speaking from the perspective of music director (the person in charge of creating, fostering, managing, and nurturing as robust a music program as the individual church can accommodate), I’ve more often found that the true management and integration problems lie with the long-service amateurs and with assuring that the hybrid amateur/professional music force does not leave the amateurs feeling left behind or disadvantaged.

***My eye as well as my experience and convictions stumbled over two articles in the last 2018 issue. Neither of these, I believe, help us develop and foster healthy, inclusive music programs in our churches.***

I've addressed this successfully in two main ways: (1) I consider everyone who works with me in the music program to be colleagues who can learn from us and from whom all of the rest of us can learn; and (2) I am very careful in the professionals that I invite or encourage to work with me. Those who are looking primarily to demonstrate their own skill and knowledge, rather than to help us all further the goal of a collaborative musical contribution to worship, are unlikely to help us nurture a harmonious program.

"Firing Volunteers"—this title and the content of the article run at cross-purposes to everything I have experienced, built, fostered, and believe about church music programs. No church I have ever served has enough volunteers that they can afford to "fire" ones that don't properly conform to a narrowly defined "right" way of doing things. Does this mean I have no standards and allow anyone to do anything they want of any musical quality? No! But I do take it as a key part of my job to determine what individual musical gifts people in my church possess and to do my best to create situations and environments where they can use them and, at the same time,

**No church I have ever served has enough volunteers that they can afford to "fire" ones that don't properly conform to a narrowly defined "right" way of doing things.**

**I do take it as a key part of my job to determine what individual musical gifts people in my church possess and to do my best to create situations and environments where they can use them and, at the same time, further the overall goals of the music program.**

further the overall goals of the music program. An example: I have a firm rule against using prerecorded accompaniment tracks in Sunday worship. In my view, worship needs a "congregation" not an "audience." If we can figure out how to do that music together live on our own, let's go for it. If not, then Sunday worship is not the right place for it to be offered. I will work with individuals to create an event, an opportunity, or a performance where that music along with its accompaniment track fits. My role becomes coach when I encounter someone who has a completely different starting point for music. An example: a few choir men were having trouble matching pitch (because while all the high school girls were in chorus, the guys were on the football field). We met each week for 30 minutes before choir to drill their parts and introduce basic choral singing skills. Another example: a seven-year-old girl had fallen in love with our hand chimes and wanted to play in the bell choir. Could she? You bet! I recruited her mother as well, and they became two of our best ringers. Note to bell choir directors: the attention span of a seven-year-old is quite

a useful discipline in planning rehearsals!

I have been blessed not to have destructive conflict or antagonistic volunteers in my music programs. However, I have seen up close the damage such conflict and such individuals can do within churches I've served. If ever you find yourself faced with such a situation, my recommendation is: go to amazon.com, get a copy of Kenneth C. Haugk's *Antagonists in the Church: How to Identify and Deal with Destructive Conflict* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), read it carefully, and follow his advice!

There are any number of other examples and situations I could detail where a flexible and creative approach to carrying out a well-conceived music program plan can result in a tent big enough to accommodate a wide variety of musical skills and experiences. The key to it all is the music director's view of the job. In my view, the music director is there to enable the congregation to discover, foster, and nurture its music. My role then becomes educator, coach, enabler of the best music, and explorer/guide to help the congregation discover music they didn't know they'd love.

Oh, and I play the organ and direct the choirs, too.

Cheers, Fran Morton  
*Music Director, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Ramsey, NJ*

*In Tempo* welcomes letters to the editor. We reserve the right to edit for space and clarity. Please send to [intempo@alcm.org](mailto:intempo@alcm.org).



# interview with the daughter of a church musician

## Kathryn Hillert Brewer

Interviewed by Allison Schweitzer, December 2018

**Richard Hillert** (1923–2010) was a noted Lutheran composer. He was distinguished professor of music emeritus at Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, IL. He was best known for his work as a composer and teacher of composition. In this interview with his eldest daughter Kathryn, she shares various memories about her father from throughout his career.

**In Tempo:** *You have a couple of siblings; where are you in the birth order?*

**Kathryn Hillert Brewer:** I'm the oldest; my father was 40 when I was born. Then came my sister Virginia, then a couple years later my brother Jonathan.

**IT:** *Tell us about your father's background.*

**KHB:** During World War II, he was too young to serve in the army. His older brother was serving, which meant that my father needed to stay home to work the dairy farm his family owned in central Wisconsin.

I remember him telling us that in his farming days he loved when it rained outside because it meant he didn't have to do farm work. He was free to play the piano and write music instead. (Although he grew up on a farm, he wasn't exactly a natural at farming). As a result, I think all of us kids like it when it rains.

He wrote piano music and many love songs for all his girlfriends,

all dedicated to them. He often wrote the words as well, in beautiful lettering, reminiscent of popular music of his day.

Some of the better ones—especially the piano pieces—he later reworked. There was one in particular called “Tapestry: Ragtime for Piano.” I loved that piece, and I really pushed him to play it more. It's probably one of my favorite pieces of his.

**IT:** *When did he finally go to college?*

**KHB:** Since my father was not able to go to college during the war, he began college in 1947 at the age of 24, graduating from Concordia, River Forest, in 1951. In his same class or “era” were such people as Carl Schalk and Carlos Messerli—the latter was his roommate for a number of years.

These friendships lasted throughout his life. My father taught at Bethlehem in St. Louis for a year and then went to Trinity in Wausau, WI. Carl Schalk and his wife Noël were then at Zion in Wausau; for the next five or six years they were close friends and colleagues in Wausau. Later Carl joined the Concordia faculty in 1965, so the two of them worked together for most of their professional careers. Carlos Messerli went on to teach at Concordia in Seward, NE, but they were close friends and confidants throughout their lives.



ESTATE OF RICHARD HILLERT

**Richard Hillert, 1962.**

**He was always more interested in the arts and music of the 20th century than in the grand masters that came before then.**

After he received his master's degree from Northwestern University, my father was offered a position at Concordia, River Forest. That was in 1959, the same year that my mother, who had a master's in biology from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, became the first female academic professor at Concordia, River Forest. So she was a bit of a groundbreaker—and in a very different field than my father. In our family, she was the logical, technical one, and my father was the creative one.

Their first date was in March 1960. A piece my father had written was being performed at Valparaiso University (IN), and he needed a ride there. So

he asked my mother to go, but the deal was he needed her car. They were married in August 1960.

They both taught for a few years at Concordia before I was born and continued teaching in a baby/car trade-off dance while I was a baby. They joked that I would become damaged in some way from listening to too much Stockhausen in their tiny apartment. By the time my sister was born they had bought a house in Melrose Park and my mother stopped teaching for awhile.

**IT:** *At what point did you start realizing that your father was a big deal?*

**KHB:** Well, he wasn't really that big a deal for a long time. He wrote music commissioned by publishers, including pieces for the Concordia Music Series. Being on staff at Concordia, he was often asked to write music for events and concerts. He was asked to work on *Worship Supplement* in 1965—a project to explore ideas that could become part of a hymnal to replace *The Lutheran Hymnal*. In the 1970s he was part of the liturgical music committee on the development of a new hymnal that would serve all North American Lutheran church bodies (which became *LBW*). It was after *LBW* was published that he really came into his own. For the rest of his professional life, his music was frequently published and he received many commissions.

**IT:** *He wrote non-sacred music as well, correct?*

**KHB:** Yes, in a sense I think it was his first love. In 2003 in honor of his 80th birthday,

**While he is well known for his liturgical and hymn works, these creative and fun pieces are the ones I wish people knew better.**

various concerts of his music were performed in connection with the Concordia Lectures in Church Music, and then CDs were published. My favorite CD is “Eclectic Hillert,” which features some of his secular music. The music is a little more accessible to a wider audience beyond a worship service, but these pieces aren't as well known. This CD includes a “Suite for Strings” (very beautiful), a Stravinsky-esque “Fanfare for Chamber Orchestra,” a “Sonata for Baroque Flute” (which sounds very un-baroque), and several voice/piano pieces. One of those, “The Open Road,” is taken from an advertisement that he saw at the Streets of Yesteryear exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. The ad was for a very fast car that could go “15 or even 25 miles per hour”! He tries his hand at some jazz on this CD, and it also has my favorite “Tapestry” piano piece. While he is well known for his liturgical and hymn works, these creative and fun pieces are the ones I wish people knew better.

**IT:** *Has anyone ever counted how many pieces he's written?*

**KHB:** He became very careful with ordering and numbering his compositions. He created a catalog in 1983, and then there was an update in 2003. I created a spreadsheet based on



**Original manuscript cover for “Tapestry.” The neon-green sticker has his catalog number.**

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the catalog that lists over 1,000 pieces. The cataloging process was extended when he donated his manuscripts to the Center for Church Music at Concordia, and currently all of his manuscripts can be accessed online (<https://www.cuchicago.edu/about-concordia/center-for-church-music/composer-manuscript-indices/richard-hillert/>).

**IT:** *Do you know what his creative process was like when he was writing music?*

**KHB:** He had a room on the lower level of the house that was all his, and he sat at the piano with a pencil in his mouth, and he'd play and write out the music on paper. If we were downstairs watching TV, we got shooed out of there. He'd put the news on, and then he'd go back to work.

He made the switch to composing using a computer in the '70s, when he was already 50-something. We had an Apple IIe and a little Casio keyboard, and he learned Finale. He composed everything on his computer after that.



KATHRYN BREWER

**Richard Hillert with daughter Kathryn at the Marienplatz, Munich, in 1983.**

**IT:** *He dedicated love songs to girlfriends—how fun! Did he dedicate anything else?*

**KHB:** He dedicated many piano pieces, concertatos, songs, and even waltzes to his friends for their birthdays and anniversaries. I remember a piece he wrote for my sister's 3rd grade class for Valentine's Day. I can still sing it in my head, but it's a little sappy for 8-year-olds!

Some of my personal favorites are the baptismal psalms he wrote and dedicated to each of his six grandchildren. My oldest nephew, Tyler, was born at 29 gestational weeks, so he was baptized in the NICU. His psalm is "He Shall Give His Angels Charge over You" from Psalm 91. It remains a very moving piece for those of us who remember how vulnerable that baby was. Tyler is 27 now. My second daughter was born seemingly healthy but died when she was only 10 months old. Her psalm, fittingly, is "The Lord Is My Light and My Salvation" from Psalm 27. It was just so appropriate, considering what all happened with her in the next year.

**IT:** *Did you share interests outside of music?*

**KHB:** Yes, we were both interested in our family genealogy and took trips to various Wisconsin courthouses to sleuth out names, dates, places, and other records. He also loved modern art, especially Picasso, where I gravitated more toward Kandinsky. We would have endless discussions about their art and lives, and how various art forms—music, painting, theater, literature—are inter-related. He was always more interested in the arts and music of the 20th century than in the grand masters that came before then. His CD collection reflected that: the Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms CDs—still in cellophane—sat on the top shelf. The rest was filled with the likes of Virgil Thompson, Stravinsky, Hoagy Carmichael, Scott Joplin, Arvo Pärt, Charles Ives, Mahler. And Gershwin. A lot of Gershwin.

**IT:** *What did you do as a family?*

My mother especially loved to travel, so each summer we would take off on a two-

three-week driving trip across the country. We managed to visit 49 states along the way! (I'm still working on Alaska.) After we all moved out, my parents traveled all over the globe, mostly on their own but sometimes as part of a group. They spent a week at a liturgical retreat in St. Petersburg, took a cruise around South America including Antarctica, visited Australia and the Fiji Islands, rode camels in Egypt and rickshaws in India, and took many driving trips through Europe. Carl and Noël Schalk traveled with my parents frequently, including a cruise to Costa Rica through the Panama Canal. Among their trips together was a visit to French Lick, IN, to a hotel where Gershwin had stayed.

But no matter where my father traveled, somehow the beautiful vistas always looked "just like Wisconsin"!

**IT:** *Any other special memories of your father that you'd like to share?*

**KHB:** We as kids saw him in such a different way. He was dad. We had fun with him. He liked ice cream. He liked to go for drives in the forest preserves around Chicago and on the roads in Wisconsin. He was not exactly the disciplinarian. I remember in the '70s, when he was writing liturgy for *LBW*, I often fell asleep to the development of "This Is the Feast" as he worked late into the night. By the time it was published in the hymnal, we knew it well!





*in tempo*

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