

## **Minister of Music Annual Report 2020**

Musicians believe music heals. Music is love. Music is the universal language. Music brings us together. Music creates peace. So now, more than ever we are in need of music. However, with the onset of COVID-19, we had no bands, no orchestras, no Broadway, no opera, no church choirs singing or bells choirs ringing - no physical church. The lack of having church music contributes to the feeling of a lack of hope.

John Wesley said “Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.”

I believe there has been a massive effort at Shepherd of the Hill to do that. Our people have brought food for people in need, given money, made videos to help with online services, worked at the church, worked at home, and have assisted in many ways to make our services continue throughout this pandemic. This effort includes members of our music ministry.

When the pandemic began, we were stunned and lost as to how to move forward; worship involves people and usually includes music. Our church expects to have music - a lot of music - Praise band, bell choirs (Allegro, Shepherd Ringers, and Reverberations), Chancel choir, His Harmonies, organ music and hymns - at least three. If ever we needed music it was now, but how can this be done safely?

At first there was a timid effort to have a couple of singers record in their own homes, separately, but that proved to be unsuccessful. Next, a small group of three worked diligently throughout the summer months to provide special music and lead the online hymn singing. Then, over the course of nine months a solid ensemble was formed: Judy Matarelli, Sonya Pedersen, Donna Rothlisberger, Donna Woods, Jan Rauworth, Amy & Gary Haut, Linda & Bill Bunting, Harold Sager, and David Helfert (some of these are subs). We are mindful of social distancing, and now use special choral masks and are grateful for the editing skills of David Rhodes.

We have also enjoyed music provided by the Praise Band and soloists David Helfert, Jan Rauworth, Tom Gustafson, and Harold Sager from time to time.

The Allegro Bell Choir, basically made up of only three families, could easily follow COVID safety guidelines and was the first group to reconvene during COVID. They willingly rehearsed during the summer months and have continued throughout the fall.

Shepherd Ringers returned in the October and Reverberations began again just before Christmas. All groups were social distancing, wearing gloves, and masks.

Through it all David Rhodes has continued to play beautiful preludes and postludes as though no virus existed.

Deepest thanks to these people for not only giving their time and talent but also for coming forward at a very difficult and scary time to see that the work of the music ministry continues not only to enhance the word of God but also to bring joy, hope, and comfort.

*My heart which is so overflowing has often been solaced and refreshed by music when sick and weary.* Martin Luther

Soli Deo Gloria  
Ellen Schroll