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ASSOCIATION OF LUTHERAN CHURCH MUSICIANS

ALCM Region 4 Newsletter



CHILDREN & YOUTH CHOIRS

Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church, Seattle, WA

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REGION 4 OFFICERS

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Kim Cramer

Happy New Year! I write this having just returned from our yearly face to face national board meeting in Chicago. It was a productive time in which the board had very open discussions about the role and vision of ALCM during this time of transition without an Executive Director. We received a report from Tom Schmidt with the results from the recently completed membership survey. Over 500 members participated. Tom will be giving you an overview in the near future. This data really sparked some excellent discussion and evaluation. The board decided that its first step will be to work with a development director to help us create a

five year plan for financial stability. We agreed that we need to spend time visioning and becoming better focused before hiring an Executive Director. We will continue to develop our identity and strive to discover how we can continue to meet the needs of our membership.

Your regional officers kicked off the year by meeting and developing a plan for our 2016 regional conferences. Our goal is to do a shorter conference, partner with other organizations and get into more areas of our region. Presently we are considering three opportunities: partnering with Joy Berg in Canada and their Worship and Music Symposium, working with the Church Music Institute at a location in Region 4 and hosting a standalone conference in the Sacramento area. We welcome any input or leadership as these plans develop.

I look forward to seeing you in Atlanta. Take time to consider all the opportunities to learn, grow, connect and be refreshed this summer. Please join us at the Region 4 lunch where we will gather together to meet, share ideas, and support each other.

May God's light continue to brightly shine through you this Epiphany season.

Blessings,
Kim

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DEADLINE ISSUE
January 15 Spring
April 15 Summer
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FROM THE EDITOR

Producing a newsletter is a somewhat daunting task. Carole Lea Arenson made this newsletter a part of her ministry for 25 years: a remarkable testimony to her and a remarkable testimony to the importance of this resource to our region and the entire ALCM. The way we communicate has changed over the years and will no doubt change even more in the next few years. I'm still old-fashioned in some ways. I like to make a "hard copy" and sit in a quiet place and read. Others read it on their iPad at the bus stop; still others at the computer sitting at their desk. No matter how you read it, I hope you find the information useful and relevant to your ministry. I hope you share the link or a paper copy with a colleague who would benefit from being a member but is not. I especially hope you will consider the upcoming themes for our next newsletter (Music and Spirituality and the Pastor/Musician Relationship) and submit an article. You have valuable insight and experience to share, and part of being a good steward is passing that information on to others to enliven and embolden the ministry we are all in together. Thank you to those who have served the past 25 years. Thank you to the team that is serving now and thank you, reader, for spending a few minutes of your busy life with us three times a year.

For my first issue I chose a topic about which I know precious little: children and youth choirs in worship. I have learned much from and been inspired by the contributors to this edition. Even if young voices are not in your church's musical palette right now, I hope you will enjoy this issue and dream about a Church where young musicians are nurtured. Where, as Marty Haugen says, all are named; their songs and visions heard and loved and treasured; taught and claimed as words within the Word.



Darren Hochstedler

Grace and Peace,
Darren



The Association of Lutheran Church Musicians' Region 4 Newsletter has a circulation of thirteen states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming; Three Canadian Provinces: Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan; Australia and New Zealand. It also includes members of the National Board of Association of Lutheran Church Musicians and selected leaders in Canada and the United States. It is the main source of communication between and for the leading Lutheran Church Musicians of the West.



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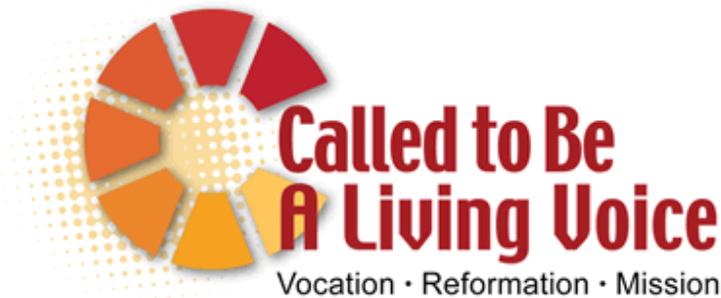
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Biennial Conference of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians and Worship Jubilee of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America July 19–23, 2015 Atlanta, Georgia

SCOTT WEIDLER
Program Director for Worship and Music
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

For the past year and certainly in the months to come, a great deal of my time, energy and passion is devoted to planning “Called to Be a Living Voice,” the gathering next July that will bring together the ELCA’s Worship Jubilee and the Biennial Conference of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians. You can read all about the details for the event at www.LivingVoice2015.org. I hope that information alone is plenty to entice you to be in Atlanta next summer.

However, there may be a deeper reason to attend which gets closer to the heart of why I am so passionate about this upcoming event. For twenty years, I have served on the worship staff of the ELCA. During those years, I have experienced lots of change, positive and negative. I have received many accolades and a lot of complaints. I have heard from thousands of people who are really happy with the direction of worship in this church and, trust me, from many who aren’t always so happy. Through it all, I continue to believe that, as Bishop Eaton is constantly reminding us, “We are church together.” No matter what our worship “styles” may be; no matter what labels we attach to our services; no matter what music is sung or vestments worn or ceremonies and gestures enacted, we all gather together to encounter the risen Christ in our midst through word and sacrament, prayer and song.

That is why you should come to Atlanta. We need to be together. We need to support and learn from one another. We need to critique (nicely) one another. Some need to have their boxes broken open. Others need to be reined in a bit. We all need to encounter our center. Together.

For that to happen, we need each of us, with our own unique perspectives, expectations and contexts, to come together, gathering around those central things of our faith, to be the church together.

Please join us in Atlanta next summer. You won’t be sorry you did.



Lutheran Summer Music

MUSIC | COMMUNITY | FAITH : THIS IS LUTHERAN MUSIC PROGRAM

Consider the early 1980s. MTV debuts on cable television in the United States, playing music videos 24 hours a day. Pope John Paul II was shot and nearly killed as he entered St. Peter's Square. Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XIII* perplexes classical musical listeners as a piece without melody, harmony or rhythm. *Cats* opened on Broadway. A worldwide television audience of over 700 million people watched the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

Against a tumultuous backdrop of world events and popular culture, Lutheran Music Program was founded and the Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival (LSM) was launched. Today some 34 years later, our mission – to transform lives and connect people through faith and music – is as critical as ever.

SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY | MUSICAL EXCELLENCE | FAITH EXPLORATION

LSM is a place where talented young musicians from across the country gather in a deliberate community and find:

- Faculty, staff, and students seeking an environment built on cooperation over competition
- A place where all students can thrive and their musical gifts valued
- An excellent musical curriculum filled with rigorous study, lessons, and daily recitals from world-class faculty artists

- Large and small ensemble performance opportunities in band, orchestra, choir, handbells, pipe organ, and musical composition
- The opportunity to explore their faith and participate in worship experience that can be shared back with their home community and congregations.



“After my first summer it was like I was a new person.”

– Paul Georgeson, senior, Trinity Lutheran College in Everett, WA

LUTHERAN SUMMER MUSIC

LSM is much more than a music camp: it's a caring community that brings out the best in people, and to which students want to return year after year. Paul's story shows the power of fusing faith and music in a summer program.

"Before I went for the first time my grades were terrible and I didn't have much direction in life. LSM showed me that being a hard worker can actually be fun if you're doing what you love."



Lutheran Summer Music conducting class.

"I started singing during my sophomore year of high school. The youth director at my church convinced me to join the choir, even though I had never sung before. After a few months of singing I realized I wasn't that bad and started taking some lessons. About that time, the LSM recruiter came to my church and I wanted to go so bad, but I needed to get my act together. I quit some bad personal habits, and began saving money for LSM. After my first summer it was like I was a new person. I cared more about everything in my life and now I wanted to go to college. So, over the next few years of high school I worked really hard to make up for the mistakes and bad grades I had made so I could attend college. And just a few weeks ago I sent in my application for graduate school to earn a Master's in Sacred Music. LSM is a huge part of the reason I am able to do that."

"The Church at large has received at least one choir director (me) who would never have gone into this ministry otherwise. What LSM shows you is the vast potential a worship leader can have to someone willing to dedicate their lives to their craft."

"Lutheran Summer Music changed my life."

— Rev. Michael Costello, Cantor, Grace Lutheran Church in River Forest, IL and member of Lutheran Music Program Board of Directors

When Michael Costello was only 14 years old, he was put on an airplane in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania with a good friend who told him about LSM. His



Michael Costello

transformative experience set in motion his vocation.

"Although my home congregation did a very good job at offering music up in service to our Lord on a weekly basis, it was at LSM that my faith and music was experienced on a daily basis! It was at that time that I realized church music could be good. I mean really good. It was such a joy to experience this incredible music with people my own age, people who not only loved good church music, but who also loved the Lord and his Church! The ultimate outcome of LSM, for me, was the realization that this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

"22 years later, I now serve as the Cantor at Grace Lutheran Church and School in River Forest, Illinois. Grace has a special connection to LSM. Founder Carlos Messerli, longtime conductor Paul Bouman, and renowned composer Carl Schalk all attend services each Sunday. To minister to those who changed my life during very important teenage years is a gift for which I will never weary of giving thanks."

"Having served as the Chaplain one summer at Lutheran Summer Music and now as a board member of Lutheran Music Program, I am

delighted that these most fitting words are still being sung each summer during Festival Week:

*Thou that hast given so much to me,
Give one thing more, a grateful heart,
Not thankful when it pleaseth me
As if thy blessings had spare days;
But such a heart, whose pulse may be thy praise.*

George Herbert (1593–1633)

“As pastors and church musicians, may we do our part to connect the mission of LSM with those who need it most: the 8th–12th graders in our churches with gifts that can be honed in service to Our Lord.”

“This was the most natural way to fundraise—by using their God-given musical talents.”

- Jim Klein, Minister of Music, American Lutheran Church in Prescott, AZ

Many congregations support students attending LSM through the Young Musicians Partnership, holding concerts, fundraisers, or allocating funds from their yearly endowment support.

“American Lutheran Church has a thriving music ministry which includes many musically involved youth. Many of the LSM students from our church began musical study at an early age in our MusicStart program, and have developed into some of the most accomplished middle school and high school musicians in the surrounding area.”

“To keep music central to our ministry, I make sure that our middle school and high school musicians are invited to play for worship services throughout the year so that the parishioners who hear them often will be inspired to contribute to our congregation’s Young Musicians Partnership program with LSM. This program helps keep it financially possible for the students to attend LSM.”



Prescott, Arizona LSM Fundraising Concert

“Each spring our congregation sponsors a concert presented by the youth who will be attending LSM during the following summer and those who have attended in the past. I also include and encourage other young musicians at ALC who are not able to attend at that time, but are potential LSMers, to perform with the LSMers to ‘catch the fever.’

“In the fall following LSM, each student who has attended the previous summer performs in a homecoming concert and shares their story of LSM. They often share the spiritual aspect of LSM in addition to their musical accomplishments. The freewill offering from this concert also is directed toward our congregational Young Musicians Partnership program for the following summer which is matched at 1/3 from Lutheran Summer Music. No other fundraisers have been necessary to make it possible for our youth to attend LSM. This was the most natural way to fundraise by using their God-given musical talents.”



LSM Collegium student

This coming summer, the Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival will be held at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa from June 21 through July 19.

For more information on LSM or the Young Musicians Partnership, please visit

www.lutheransummertime.org

or email LSM at:

admissions@lutheransummertime.org



Christmas at Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church, Seattle, WA

CREATING A STRONG Children's Ministry

*DONNA HOFFMAN
EDUCATOR AND MUSICIAN
SEATTLE, WA*

Today's church is looking for a faith to know by heart.

Few practices allow for such pan-generational heart-knowledge as the singing of hymns. The combination of text and tune stimulates cognition and feeling. The involvement of the whole body – both the whole physical body of the individual and the assembled, corporate body – gives a multi-faceted, multi-sensory experience.

We often overlook children as capable leaders for this heart-centered faith practice. Observant, faithful leadership and creative encouragement from a children's choir director, a Sunday School teacher, a pastor, some parents, or a combination of these adults can inspire children to lead

us into new ventures of understanding and expressing the wonders of God's love.

And it's not that hard. Begin by identifying the often-sung, beloved hymns of the congregation. Place those hymns on the lips and in the hearts of young singers. Choose a verse from the hymn that has imagery that connects most readily to children. Here's a key concept: do not be concerned about the poetic language; children will grow into the words as their faith develops. And even more importantly, as they convey the meaning of the texts as they understand them, they will lead adults of all ages to experience God as expressed in texts old and new.

Numbers make no difference. Providing this leadership experience for children works with three or thirty-three. Allow ample opportunity to practice the hymn so that the children know it well. This might happen in a highly organized children's choir program, through Sunday School music time, or in a small family group.

CREATING A STRONG CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

But this is not about performance. This is faith building for all generations. So provide opportunities while learning text and tune for the children to talk about the words. Even the youngest of children can connect to the words of almost any hymn. The environment to create is one that is accepting, welcoming, and non-judgmental. It is a matter of the heart: What do you think this means?

In my experiences, children were asked to talk about the "hiding place" in *Thy Holy Wings*. One child answered by folding his hands in prayer and then hiding behind those hands, saying, "This is a way we can hide with God." In the hymn *When the Poor Ones* children offered many places they see God while unpacking the text "we see God here, by our side..." They named people who help to build homes for those who have lost them in a storm, children inviting others to play on the playground, the nurse who put a band-aid on a scraped knee. They took the words into their hearts, then shared them by heart and as they sang placed them into the hearts of the congregation.

Here is a list of seasonal songs that connect easily with children because of their rich imagery:

Advent	<i>O, Come O Come Emmanuel</i>
Epiphany	<i>I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light</i>
Lent	<i>Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word</i>
Easter	<i>Christ is Alive, Let Christians Sing</i>
Pentecost	<i>O Living Breath of God</i>
General	<i>Thy Holy Wings</i> <i>Shall We Gather at the River</i> <i>When the Poor Ones</i> <i>Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises</i> <i>O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee</i>

In the thirteen years that I served as a Children's Choir Director, the children learned more than thirty-five stanzas of different hymns by memory. Those hymns are written indelibly in their hearts.

Ask the children up to age 8 to create gestures that are meaningful to them as an additional way of experiencing the text. One of my most memorable experiences came when teaching *In the Bleak Midwinter*. While singing "yet what I can, I give him/Give my heart," the 5, 6, and 7 year olds began with hands clasped over their hearts and then reached out, palms up, to offer their hearts to God.

These experiences with hymns are not solely for the rehearsal room or the Sunday School class, however. Their real significance comes to light as children share the hymns they have taken into their hearts as leaders in congregational worship. Choose a stanza for the children the words of which they most fully embrace and invite the congregation to join for the remainder of the hymn. The children might sing hymn settings of the propers (Alleluia Verse, psalm refrains, various settings of *Holy, Holy, Holy* or *Lamb of God*). Of great benefit for all is when the children unveil a new hymn. It's really pretty hard for a congregation to claim it

as unsingable when the assembly's youngest members have just introduced it.

Such a practice of hymn singing also allows a place of honor for children in worship. It incarnates their full participation as members of the body of Christ by allowing them leadership of a real part of the liturgical palette, not a special set of paints that only children should use. Why have the kids relegated to a theologically thin text – I have the joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart – when they could embrace some of the tradition's richest poetry?

As the years pass by and the repertoire of hymns known by heart increases, children have the additional blessing of being more fully engaged from the pew. As they sing side by side with adults those hymns that they have come to love (and occasionally lead, and sometimes even introduce!) are a cherished, familiar friend. Their voices will soon be heard in and among the voices of all who worship.

Together, women and men, boys and girls – all children of God – have a vehicle by which to embrace their faith. It is a vehicle particularly suited to these times in which we are all searching for ways to experience our faith with hearts, and hands, and voices.



Donna Hoffman led two children's choirs at Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church for 13 years. She left the legacy of a strong, vibrant program which continues today.

WORKING WITH A

Children's Bell Choir

CHRIS ROGERS

ABIDING SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH
LAKE FOREST, CA

I inherited our elementary bell group some years ago. A basic system was in place. So I would like to share with you what I have learned about bells and children.

Our bell choir is open to 4th-8th graders. Children younger than fourth grade do not have the physical size or maturity to handle the bells. However, I do use handchimes with younger children.

By fourth grade most of my students have learned the basic notes on the staff and basic counting to be able to track, or follow their notes. We do have "try-outs" for the new members. This is a good time to assess their musical knowledge and show them how to ring the bell. I have never had to turn anyone down. As we begin a new year, we always go over procedures and rules. These rules come from Carolynne Mathis' *Teaching Young Ringers*:

- Ringers attend all rehearsal and performances and must call the director when absent.
- Ringers always wear gloves.
- Bells never touch skin or each other.
- No clothing that has metal or plastic in the shoulder area.
- No drinks, candy, food, or gum in rehearsal.
- Only the director makes corrections
- Ringers respect and care for the bell equipment.
- Everybody helps. (my added rule)

Everybody helps. That means everyone helps with set up and take down. No one leaves until it is done. I usually try to have everything set up before the rehearsal, but have the kids help put things away after rehearsal. Another adult ringer is also valuable to assist and give individual attention to ringers.

Three octaves of bells use 11 ringers. Each student is assigned two bells and their accidentals. The left hand always has the line note and the right hand the space note. Two octaves usually use 8 ringers. When I have more ringers to place, they buddy up with another ringer and use the handchimes.

I have created a chart of the positions and put the ringer's name beside their bell position on Post-it® notes. It is easy to move people around on the chart and helps me remember the change.

Now what do the students want to do? Ring the bells! We do drills practicing the proper stroke all at once, specifying ring the right or left hand bell. I also use flash cards of basic rhythm patterns and patterns found in the music to teach them all together. Don't forget good damping practices at this time.

One way to begin even without using music is to play chords. I use Carolynne Mathis' method from *Teaching Young Ringers* published by the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers. The I chord is represented by a circle, the IV chord by a square, and the V chord by a diamond. Draw these symbols on the board with the notes that go with them behind the chord symbol. Then point to the chords you want them to play. Several songs will fit to this formula. We play "Jesus Loves Me" and "Kum Bah Yah" using this technique. We even sing along once the chords are mastered. Remem-





ber, if you are using 2 octaves, to use the F# bell. You can make your own charts to follow. I often use charts at the beginning of the year that everyone plays from to make sure they are tracking properly. *Teaching Young Ringers* by Carolyn Mathis gives a wealth of information about working with children and developing musical literacy and includes drills to develop handbell skills. It is geared for a church setting, but could also be used in a school.

For a basic curriculum, I use *Basic Training for Bells Skill Building for Ringers* by Venita MacGorman, published by Choristers Guild CGB323. This provides a step by step progression of skills and provides settings of music for 2 and 3 octaves. Most of the pieces are appropriate to play for a worship service. The skills covered are ringing the bell, damping the bell, changing bells, dynamics, the shake, the echo, the swing, let vibrate, martellato and martellato lift, and using mallets. It has a good explanation of each technique, followed by a piece that uses it. I do not get through the whole book in one school year. With junior high students, you may progress faster. However, I often skip around so I can show the techniques used in our repertoire.

We don't dwell on mistakes, we plow forward!

When looking for individual pieces for your choir, look for music that will keep all ringers involved. Big chords as opposed to individual notes. To stretch your budget, look for collections of reproducible materials and copy what you need. I give out a schedule at the beginning of the year with dates we play in church. I also send notes home and e-mail the parents to make sure the ringer can attend. If needed, I use adult ringers as subs, or reschedule.

I really enjoy working with my elementary choir. They are eager to please and want to learn. We keep it positive and even clap for ourselves or sections when we get it right! We have the "catch and release" policy adopted from fishermen. Catch your mistakes, know what you did wrong, and then let it go. Try to get it right next time. We don't dwell on mistakes, we plow forward!

Resources

Successful Ringing Step by Step

by John Behnke. Concordia Publishing House
99-1678

Teaching Young Ringers by Carolynne

Mathis. *The American Guild of English Handbell Ringers (AGEHR) R-217*

Basic Training for Bells by Venita

MacGorman. *Choristers Guild CGB323*

Rhythm Training for Ringers by Venita

MacGorman. *Choristers Guild CGB518*

Everyone Ring Praise Today (Sets 1, 2, 3)

Jeffrey Honore. Concordia Publishing House
97-6558 (These sets are ringing just chords
along with hymns throughout the church year)

Multicultural Tunes that Teach

by Martha Lynn Thompson.
AGEHR.AG011 (Reproducible) www.AGEHR.org

INTERVIEW WITH COMPOSER VALERIE SHIELDS

Nurturing a Youth Choir (7th-12th grade)

INTERVIEW BY NORMA AAMODT NELSON

I. Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church (PRLC) has a reputation for fine worship and excellence in music involving all ages. When I first moved to the Seattle area, I was encouraged to attend the Easter Vigil at PRLC, where I first heard your choir lead worship with enthusiasm and vibrancy. I was told that you developed, led and nurtured this group. Please share the history and your secrets.

This is my twenty-eighth year as organist at PRLC. I began my work with the present Youth Choir about sixteen years ago. As I recall, there were five members at the first rehearsal. The choir included singers from 7th to 12th grade. There was not critical mass to have both a middle school and a high school choir. The next year Shari Anderson joined me as accompanist and assistant. Her partnership has been an essential part of this choir.

One of the boys was James Anderson. He had grown up in the children's choir program and was a remarkable musician. He had perfect pitch, was musically literate, and I never, in all of his years in choir, had to play a part for him. His voice was also in the process of changing. There were about three other girls who had grown up in the children's choir at PRLC. They had all received very good training at PRLC and came



Valerie Shields

from families who were committed to the part music played in the worship life of the congregation. I now view these choir members as pioneers – missionaries even! They were in uncharted waters.

I will admit that the first year was not easy. The support of the staff and congregation were key factors in helping this fledgling choir get off the ground. I also had to remind myself of what I had heard Ronald A. Nelson say years ago while I was a student at St. Olaf. "It takes (at least) five years to build a church choir. Think long-term." As there had been no middle school or high school choir at PRLC for many years, prospective young singers didn't know what it could look like to be in such a group. I also questioned whether it was really possible to combine middle school and high school students.

Besides staff and congregational support, and Ronald Nelson's wise words, I relied upon what I had learned from the great mentors who had formed me in music and/or faith. I also had parents who put a high value on and made great sacrifices for my education.

These are things that I have come to believe are key components in building a youth choir:

*Phinney Ridge
Lutheran Church, Seattle, WA
Youth Choir;
taken on Maundy Thursday*



They are surely not secrets, as I have borrowed freely from things others have implemented.

- Work with what you have. Choose – or write – repertoire that brings out the best in your choirs
- Choose the best music and texts – quality repertoire that will stay with singers for their entire lives. It's up to you to decide what those words and melodies will be, so take that job very seriously.
- Find ways to build community – our choir looks forward to a Christmas and end-of-year party that have many traditions.
- Give honor to your seniors (everyone will be one someday) and lift up entering seventh graders (they are necessary for the program to continue).
- Find ways to give your singers a broader vision of what is possible. I remember engaging a couple of SPU students to enable the rather new PRLC Youth Choir to sing Mozart's *Ave Verum*. We celebrated Mozart's birthday that year with a choir party. Now Youth Choir alumni join us at special services, and we occasionally sing with the Adult Choir.
- Make choir a place set apart from some of the burdens of teenage life. It needs to be a very safe place where diversity is not only welcome, but celebrated.
- Find ways to identify, encourage and put to use the gifts of each member.
- Encourage creativity.
- Don't be afraid to share your faith and music journey with your singers.
- Attend some music (and even sporting) events in your singers' school lives.
- Take on a challenge for you and your choir from time to time. Keep that comfort zone ever-stretching.
- Find ways for singers with sports/drama conflicts during your rehearsals to be able to participate on Sundays. Of course, they will need to be prepared. This requires extra work from the director but is needed these days.

2. One year I had the opportunity to serve Lutheran Summer Music's faculty and I remember a good number of the youth were from Seattle area and your choir. How have you and PRLC encouraged this? How many years have Phinney kids been attending LSM?

Pastor Paul E. Hoffman, now retired from PRLC, brought the vision of LSM to PRLC,



having previously served as chaplain there twice. His children had also attended. During the last 14 years, eighteen young people from PRLC have attended LSM. Ten of them have attended more than once.

PRLC has made it possible for every interested person to attend. This has been done through generous grants from the church endowment fund and gifts from congregants who see the value in this program. In the beginning years, we held plant sales and more recently we have had a benefit concert including attendees, alumni and Youth Choir members and friends. You can see last year's concert at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNhS1vi3I54>

3. Are there specific ways the youth "give back" to the community?

Over and over again. I truly don't know where to begin in answering this question.

I would have to write at least fifty inspirational stories – each one featuring a different choir member or alumnus. When I look at the list of choir alumni, I see spectacular people of service. They are all making a difference in this world.

4. My recent college intern (from Trinity Lutheran College in Everett) is an excellent product of your program, as he is now serving in choral directing himself at Ballard First. He tells me you discovered him and taught him to read music. Can you share more, and any other insights that you've learned over the years, as far as retaining and involving choir alums?

Paul Georgeson is the poster child for what can happen if a young person discovers their singing voice – even as a teen-ager. There were many things that came together for this perfect storm. The most important, I believe, was that James Anderson (see above) sat by Paul week after week at rehearsal. James not only had perfect pitch and beautiful tone, but demonstrated patience and service at each and every rehearsal. One year James told me he would be in NYC with his orchestra on Easter Sunday. The baritone part of Bach's "My Spirit is Joyful" would need to be sung by Paul and his brother, Daniel. They committed to coming early to rehearsal for several weeks to learn their part. The next year, I used my continuing ed. funds and observed Beth Ann Bonnacroy give Daniel and Paul voice lessons. Paul and his family shortly

VALERIE SHIELDS

afterwards made the leap of faith to send him to LSM. He was hooked.

Choir alums are invited to sing with the Youth Choir at Confirmation, Christmas Eve and the Easter Vigil. They are also recruited when there is a piece that will only fly with their participation. This Christmas Eve nineteen alumni returned to sing with the Youth Choir.

5. Involving young men, with their changing voices, is often a challenge. How do you engage and encourage your young male teens?

Honoring the unchanged boy's voice is a great place to start. That's where so many boys discover the joy of singing. If these boys can be encouraged to sing alone, in boy ensembles or with older female siblings, they can offer their unique gift at worship where they will also serve as a role model for other boys. Our seventh grade boys almost always join the Youth Choir singing alto or soprano.

6. Your commissions have been sung by community youth choirs all over, and I know you have a deep list of published and unpublished works. Thank you for listing them here, and highlighting any special anthems which are particularly accessible, as well as ways we can access the unpublished works.

I have just committed myself to work on getting some of my unpublished works to publishers. A list of my published works can be found at <http://prlc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Shields-compositions-sacred.pdf> and a list of some of my favorites for children and youth follow this article.

7. For fun, I believe you told me you love to garden. What else keeps you sane?

Gardening, for sure. Nature, meals/coffee/walks with friends and family, time with children and old people, exploring new places and ideas, staying in touch with my mentors who are still living. I realize more and more that they not only taught me about music, but life. I continue to learn from them, as well as my students and choir members.

Stuff that Works

for Youth Choirs

Arrangements by Valerie Shields

Grant, O Lord 2 pt. treble, piano - Mark Foster;YS0321

Simple and lovely...this musical prayer for treble voices is the simple wish that we might put our words and thoughts into acts of kindness and good will. "Grant, O Lord" is a heartfelt song of gratitude and grace, easily accessible to children's choirs.

Have No Fear, Little Flock H. Zimmermann - SATB, children's choir (optional), congregation, 2 trumpets, timpani (optional), organ - Kjos, Ed. 8853

The words and melody of this hymn are very accessible to children. They can be easily learned and memorized and will remain in their lifetime repertoire. This setting will have everybody in your music program participating. Optional parts for congregation. An excellent way to feature your children's choir singing in a festival piece.

Let Your Light So Brightly Shine 2 pt.. choir, 10 handbells (opt), organ - Morningstar, MSM-50-8410

This simple round is enhanced with a nice accompaniment and optional easy handbells or chimes. Perfect for Easter Vigil, Confirmation, Baptism, Commitment/Discipleship, Community/Fellowship. Moderately Easy to Medium.

Psalm 100 text adapted,V.S., Scottish folk tune - 2 pt. (or unison) treble, violin or c instrument (opt.),piano

This arrangement of Psalm 100 is perfectly paired with a traditional "contra dance" which is fully described in the octavo. Add C Instruments to double the vocal parts and this is a great arrangement to get children moving while singing.

In the Bleak Midwinter - G. Holst, C. Rosetti - 2 pt. treble, oboe, piano, strings (optional) – Colla Voce

This is a perfect anthem for your choir of young voices. Much of the anthem is unison with some well-written 2-part harmony. With the haunting oboe part and optional strings and beautiful descant, this piece sounds equally beautiful simply done or with the complete arrangement.

Silent Night - F. Gruber, J. Mohr - 2 pt. treble with descant, flute, oboe, piano, strings (optional) - Colla Voce SATB, flute, oboe, piano, strings (optional) - Colla Voce

Thy Little Ones, Dear Lord, Are We - J. Schulz, H. Brorson - 2 pt. treble, piano - Kjos, Ed. SATB, piano - Kjos, Ed. 8854

If you are just starting a youth choir the above two pieces should be in your library. They both are beautiful 2 part treble arrangements for the Christmas Season. As your choir grows in confidence and ability you can easily add the tenor and/or bass parts. Also perfect for the Sunday after Christmas with a multi-generational choir featuring the youth.



Choristers Guild

AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE

ARLETTA ANDERSON, CANTOR, ASSOCIATE IN MINISTRY
QUEEN ANNE LUTHERAN CHURCH, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

One of the great joys in my work as Cantor at Queen Anne Lutheran Church is the care and nurture of the children's choirs. In our Cherub Choir (K-3), it is amazing to me how just a few children are able and willing to sing profound and important words for our worship that make a difference in my life, in their lives, in the lives of their parents and siblings and in the lives of so many who have come to be a part of our worship. Yes, they charm us in their delightful presence, so beautifully created by God. But what makes me leap for joy inside is what their voices bring to the meaning of our worship. What does it mean when four children between the ages of 4 and 7 proclaim the Good News of the angels in Luke 2 by singing on Christmas Eve, Michael Bedford's *Glory to God* from *Seasonal Songs for Young Singers* (CGA 1160). What does it mean when two children ages 5 and 7 sing an invitation on Transfiguration Sunday to "Come to the mountain, come to the mountain and be transformed" by Pamela L. Hughes from LifeSongs (AFP 9780806642703). What does it mean when these same two children sing a Mozart melody with the text "I lie, O Lord, within your care, awake or when I'm sleeping..." at a Hymn Festival at our church under Robert Hobby's leadership. What does it mean when five young Cherubs sing the words to the Psalm Refrain "They shall receive a blessing from the God of their salvation" on All Saints Sunday while the congregation speaks the psalm text responsively?



Arletta Anderson

I suggest it means that God's Word is being proclaimed in yet another way; the children are participating in worship in a meaningful moment; the children are memorizing quality texts that will swirl through their minds in the days ahead for who knows how long. It means that the congregation is listening to these words in a new way as the sounds of children's voices draw unusual attention; it means that God's love is shared; it means that our community of faith values children's participation in worship; it means that the children are blessed by being a blessing. And the list goes on.

What makes me leap for joy inside is what their voices bring to the meaning of our worship

If you don't have a children's choir singing in your worship, dedicate yourself today to making this happen. The rewards for you, for your congregation, and most of all, for the children, cannot be measured. The benefits are immense, even with only a few children. Begin by engaging parents in the conversation. Choristers Guild is an important organization that supports those of us who are doing this work, and CG provides abundant resources: www.cg.org. Choristers Guild is an organization

that does extraordinarily great work under the capable leadership of Jim Rindelau. There are many local chapters supported by this national organization. I happen to be on the Board of the Washington State Chapter. You, also, can have a Chapter in your area, if you don't already. Yes, being on this Board takes some of my time. In my annual report to my congregation, I tell them of my involvement in CG as a way I serve the larger church outside the doors of our congregation. But my efforts do directly benefit my own congregation in providing opportunities for my few children to sing with a large choir at the Spring Festival, and dozens of other good things come of this. And for me personally... *uffda*, the benefits are immense. I have met other directors in the area who now are my good friends, and even though our meetings are usually by conference call, I have learned so much from gifted colleagues. You can only imagine what happens when we meet face-to-face. We can't stop the flow of ideas, music suggestions, and problem solving with each other as we share stories and experiences with our children and their families. It is so much fun!

How did we get this going in our area? Our Chapter had been going strong many years ago... and then leadership waned for a while until a few of us started it up again. Two of us - Nancy, a Methodist, and I, a Lutheran - met with Danielle, also a Lutheran, to brainstorm about what we could do together. The next meeting included Beth (also a Lutheran), then soon Danny (a Presbyterian), then Vicki, then Karin and so it goes around our state. Now Nancy is moving to Whidbey Island, Danny is moving to Arkansas; life changes. But this isn't about us. It is about God's work that we have the privilege to be a part of on this journey. And now

our journey has another blessing in that we have a Board member who is willing to volunteer her time to help any congregation in our area get started with a children's choir; or work with directors new to the field of children's choir directing. It is people helping people, friendships developing, communities coming together. Resources are plentiful and amazing. Benefits are even more so. It is faith-building, life-changing, and incredibly exciting! Thanks be to God for abundant blessings.



Easter service, Calvary by the Sea Lutheran Church, Honolulu, Hawai'i

CHILDREN AND YOUTH CHOIRS

Some Musings from Hawai'i

*TOM POOLE
DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP AND THE ARTS
CALVARY BY THE SEA LUTHERAN CHURCH
HONOLULU, HAWAII'*

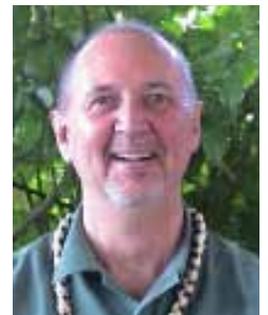
Any consideration of "Children and Youth Choirs in Worship in Hawai'i" should include

- 1) the music and choral practices of the various ethnic traditions found in Hawai'i
- 2) the intrinsic role of dance/movement in choral performances, especially Hawaiian; and
- 3) the models of both public and private school and extra-curricular choirs

One should not assume that the inherited American–European model of the graded choir program is the only model in Hawai'i. While this model is dominant in most public and private schools, and in the congregations of the major Protestant traditions in Hawai'i, it is not the dominant model found in the cultural traditions of Polynesia, nor in all private schools.

The Pacific Buddhist Academy, for example, has an outstanding beginning and Performance Taiko Drumming Ensemble; there is no choral program.

The Tongan and Samoan cultures in their congregational (religious) practices generally do not separate the choirs by age or gender; they are age and gender-inclusive—children, youth, and adults all sing together. And it is a remarkable sound of SATB, unaccompanied singing, with an amazing dynamic contrast, and uniform vocal quality throughout all the parts and ranges. Interestingly, the boys stand and sing with the men; the girls with the women. One of the best examples of this alternative to the graded choir structure is the Tongan Choir of the Tongan Congregation of Kilohana United Methodist Church on O'ahu.



Tom Poole

Although Protestant missionaries forced the traditions and legacies of hula underground,

there has since arisen a Hawaiian Renaissance, bringing with it a blossoming of Hawaiian language charter schools and a Hawaiian Studies programs at the University of Hawai'i. It has reclaimed and rediscovered that Hawaiian music cannot exist without hula, and vice-versa. Thus, almost any presentation in Hawaiian by children or a youth choir will include hula, or hula-like motions. This applies to both school and congregational programs. The presence of hula is especially seen in the annual May Day Programs, which are a cultural celebration of Hawai'i, its unification by Kamehameha the Great, and representative songs (and hula) and flowers from the major islands.



This use of hula by choruses in the public sector has also influenced the religious sphere. It is not unusual for individual congregations to have their own Hula Halau (Hula group). At Calvary by the Sea Lutheran Church, this awareness that movement cannot be separated from music expressed itself in the formation both of a Hula Halau, as well as of "Performing Arts @ Calvary." PAC is an adapting of the graded choir program to include instruction in music, dance, and drama—the performing arts, geared for first grade through middle school. The focus each fall and spring is the presentation of a fully-staged musical play.

as a model of choral and hula excellence for all children and youth choirs in Hawai'i.

The other person who has done and continues to do important and effective work with children/youth choirs is Kahu Rennie Mau, pastor of Ko'olau Hui'ia Church, in Anahola, Kaua'i.

Finally, there are two individuals who have done amazing work with children/youth choirs in Hawai'i. First is Nola Nāhulu, the Artistic Director of the Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus in Honolulu. This chorus serves



Dance is an integral part of the Hawai'i Youth Opera Chorus experience.



WORKING WITH The Preschool Choir

NICOLE TOUPIN
RECENT GRADUATE, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ALBERTA (EDMONTON, ALBERTA)
PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN'S CHOIR CONDUCTOR,
BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, SHERWOOD PARK, ALBERTA

As a church musician, I feel truly called to work with children. My own experience with music began in a regional Children's Choir program and took me through university and into adulthood. I still enjoy performing with a semi-professional ensemble, but my love of music began at a young age. I personally believe that giving children a good foundation in both worship and music will build strong church leaders in the future.

I work with the youngest population of choristers in the Bethel Lutheran Church community. "God Squad," as we are known, is made up of boys and girls, ages 3-6. Working with this age presents unique opportunities that working with older singers does not. We focus less on a "performing" aspect, and more on building musical skills that will carry these voices as they grow. Our rehearsal time is one hour a week, on Saturday mornings from 10-11 (with a 10-minute snack break, supplied by a parent). We begin class with a rhythm game then go over rules and warm up our bodies and our voices. I find it important to also get the body moving for these young children, simply because it helps them focus. We use tongue twisters, numbered scales and arpeggiated scales to warm up the voices.

After vocal warm-ups, we settle into group games. Many of the games are adapted from games typically played in a school music classroom. They incorporate simple props, turn taking, and musical theory. One, *Closest Key*, is a particular favorite that encourages the development of dynamics. We have one child hide a key and another (who was out of the room) must find it. The choir sings louder when they're closer to it and softer as they get further. Other favorites are found in the classic book, *The Kodaly Method I* by Lois Choksy, as well as one I have developed for rhythm which we call *Fruit Salad*. With this game, we use the syllables of different fruits in time with a drum beat. The children have fun making up different Fruit Salad combinations with fruit pictures that have notation values on them.

Giving children a good foundation in both worship and music will build strong church leaders in the future.

When it comes to singing in a worship service, you never quite know what you're going to get. We sing once every 2-3 weeks, either at the early services or the late service. Due to other family commitments we can be missing anywhere from one to five singers. Sometimes this age group is particularly cooperative; sometimes they aren't. There is often a child who decides that today is the day that they would rather play with their shoes than sing. We try to vary our repertoire choices. We use



simple traditional hymns, worship songs that are familiar to children, call and response songs and seasonal choices appropriate to the church year. Some favorites have been *The Butterfly Song*, *My God is So Big*, and *You Are the Light*. To aid in memorization, the first several songs of the year include actions to help with memorization. We use simple, acoustic guitar accompaniment so as not to overpower the children. We only practice one or two songs in a month. This makes it easier as the children are not overwhelmed trying to remember which song is which, and keeps their attention focused. We perform each song twice throughout the choir season: once at the early services and once at the late one. The children are often a highlight of the service for the congregation, and bring joy with their songs.

The love of the Lordshines through

As a church musician working with young children, I take heart in knowing that what I do brings joy to the children I work with and to the congregation. The love of the Lord shines through these small but powerful voices that lift up praise in the most unique and satisfying way.



Music Games for the Preschool Church Choir

Closet Key - This game requires a key and one person to leave the room (or cover their eyes) for a short length of time. One person closes their eyes or leaves the room while another hides the key somewhere. The person who leaves returns, and the choir sings the song. As the “finder” gets closer to the key, they sing loudly, and as they move further away, they sing more quietly. This song is designed to introduce dynamics, but also works on enabling children to work on and hear pitch differences.

Fruit Salad – Different cards are made up with pictures of different fruits with different notational values (e.g. Pear = quarter note, Apple = two eighth notes, etc.). Children choose the fruit in the eight beat fruit salad. Then, tapping the beat on our laps, we say our “Fruit Salad” as a group. This builds skills in rhythm development and is a building block of notational theory.

Freeze Dance – This game requires a CD of your choosing. I like to use a children’s worship CD or *Veggietales* video. When the music is playing, children dance around the room and when the music is paused they must freeze like a statue. You can call out different things to dance (e.g. “dance like a penguin”, or “dance like a banana”). This is a good way to burn off some excess energy and get things moving after sitting, or to warm up.

State Newsletter Representatives

BY DARREN HOCHSTEDLER



REGION 4

Alaska
Arizona
California
Hawaii
Idaho
Montana
New Mexico
Nevada
Oregon
Utah
Washington
Wyoming

CANADA

Alberta
British Columbia
Northwest Territories
Saskatchewan
Yukon

Australia
New Zealand

One of the new features beginning with this edition of the newsletter is submissions from our state representatives. Eventually I hope to have a representative from each state in region 4 which includes thirteen states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming; and three Canadian provinces: Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan; Australia and New Zealand. So far confirmed representatives include:

CANADA REPRESENTATIVE

Dr. Joy Berg
Director of Choral Activities, Chapel Cantor
Concordia University College of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
joy.berg@concordia.ab.ca

HAWAII REPRESENTATIVE

Tom Poole
Director of Worship and the Arts
Calvary by the Sea Lutheran Church
Honolulu, HI
tom@calvarybythesea.org

So that leaves just 11 states left who need representatives. While I continue reaching out, I encourage you to prayerfully consider volunteering. The duties are pretty easy:

1. Write (or find a writer from your state) for three short articles a year that would be interesting to other Lutheran church musicians.
2. Forward events from your state that may be of interest to readers.
3. Provide feedback about the newsletter and thoughts you may have on keeping it relevant to our readers.

Contact me at administrator@prlc.org if you are willing to volunteer for your state. I would love to *hear from you*.

New Members

Sally Fuller
Spokane, WA

Eric Heusinger
Valley Village, CA

Judith Olson
E. Wenatchee, WA

