

## January 2021, Music report to the Board

The music program created a successful Christmas Eve service in December, and I was thrilled with the result and that so many people were able to share and enjoy it.

After that effort, I plan to manage my time with the church prudently through June. I have been overwhelmed with the pace of church work, with deadlines and new recordings every week. My physical and mental health were unable to keep up. Although I technically had a week or two of vacation since March 2020, each time it has been necessary to work during those times to keep up with recording and editing, so I effectively have not had time off since August 2019.

I have spoken with Reverend DL, and we have come up with a plan to give me regular time off, and for me to have some weeks with simpler piano recordings for services that take less time on my part. I still look forward to creating beautiful choir anthems and engaging the choir with interesting pieces, as that is my favorite part of the job.

On a separate note, I am looking forward to warmer weather in May and June! While it is doubtful that herd immunity from a vaccination program will be complete at that time, the ability to enjoy the outdoors combined with a likely largely vaccinated choir will allow for the occasional masked, distanced, outdoor rehearsal or event, or a drive-in parking lot choir "concert" with our virtual performances shown. These would be carefully planned to surpass RIDOH's safety standards.

With that in mind, I would ask the Board to consider perhaps holding off on "blanket" announcements regarding in-person event cancellations for specific dates in the future. Since singing indoors may not be truly safe for a long time, even after many are vaccinated, it will be necessary for the music program to get creative to keep its participants engaged in 2021.

I do have one final item I wish to bring up, which I suspect is on your radar as we turn the corner toward hopeful public health news. While vaccinations will be immense for our community, the church will need to develop a ventilation plan - perhaps consulting with an expert - and other safety plans for worship to ensure the safe working environment and worship space of employees and congregants. With the small windows we have, and lack of air movement and cross-ventilation, our space will likely remain dangerous for a number of people post-vaccination. It is important to note that current data suggests that roughly 1 in 20 vaccinated people would still develop illness, but also that asymptomatic transmission is reduced by roughly two-thirds - that is, there may potentially be a third of people in those situations susceptible to the long-term damage that Covid causes even in asymptomatic cases (lung scarring, etc.).

While it probably feels early to consider this, I believe sooner than later would be most beneficial (as we've seen what planning later than sooner has done for the vaccine rollout!). I, for one, and I suspect the congregation and other staff, would be overjoyed knowing the church is creating a comprehensive plan for our safety, so that, when it's time, we can all enjoy each other's company again.

Respectfully submitted, with apologies for the length, and thanks for your work,

Mike Galib