



Music Ministry and coming out of COVID



In March 2020, I was sitting in a hastily-called faculty meeting led by uncertain administrators. We were told that a pandemic had been declared, and that we would not be meeting at school in person for a time to come. All of our teaching would need to be virtual, and we would start tomorrow. COVID, like March, came in like a lion.

As we all know all too well, our lives were changed that month and we were plunged into the darkness of uncertainty and fear. We did not know the answers; we did not even know the questions. Music ministries all over the world, particularly choral music, were about to take an unimaginable hit.

The shock of the "new normal" wore off, our adrenaline petered out and we began to experience weariness. Time-honored traditions of singing together were jettisoned into the realm of the forbidden. Sacred song, that we took for granted, was imperiled. We dearly missed singing, we dearly missed each other.

COVID did not come with an owner's manual. Different schools, churches, denominations, and other communities dealt with COVID in different ways. It was a dark time in an already divided country. Masks became symbols of what they should not symbolize. I was caught between two polarities. My church was abundantly cautious, and my school was not. I had to adapt between the two environments and to respect both perspectives.

By God's wonderful grace, we are on the other side of COVID. While we still need to be careful, there is more darkness in the rear-view mirror than on the road ahead. What does it mean to bring a music ministry, choirs, singing congregations, out of COVID? How do we move forward? As hard as it has been, the pandemic has taught us a few good things about working together.

Here are some thoughts of how we may navigate our music ministry at this time:

1. Grace. Extend it to each other as the Lord extends it to us. Come when you can, leave when you need to leave. Wear a mask if you would like. We love you and want you here with us when you can be.
2. Stretch. Rebuilding is not as neat and clean as a well-oiled machine. It's going to be new again. That is both exciting and uncertain.
3. Faith. Trust God and seek him when discerning your role in music ministry now.
4. Imagine. We are who we are now, not who we used to be. Things may look different.
5. Patience. It will take time to become established.
6. Pray. Pray more. Rejoice. Trust. God is faithful.

Lastly, here is what I am thinking about our music ministry:

1. Soft start for children and youth choirs. That means, let's get rehearsals on the calendar and see who is available. It's not the best time of year to do this (beginning of the school year is better), but let's not defer. We won't worry about when the kids sing in worship. Maybe they will be ready before June. Maybe not. Priority is getting rehearsals back. I would expect we'll see something more "organized" in the fall.
2. Calling all men. We really need more men in the Herald Choir. This is no longer "you have a nice voice, would you like to join us?". It is now, "we need you to come and sing with us, would you please help?". If you are available on Thursday evenings for rehearsal and Sunday mornings to sing, please let me know, guys. If you are an 8:00 a.m. person, same thoughts for the Canticle Choir. Please help us.
3. Instrumentalists - middle school through adult. I think we have a new and wonderful opportunity to put together a hymn orchestra. Please get your instruments out of the attic or basement and stay tuned!

It is a wonderful delight to be here leading St. Peter's music ministry. With God's help, and working with others, I am committed to finding the best way forward for our traditional music. Please pray for me, for all of us, and please consider pushing your comfort zones and joining us.

— Tom Berdos

Worship for March 5

Second Sunday in Lent

Traditional Worship & Communion

8 a.m.

Preaching: Pastor Hand

Traditional Worship

10:30 a.m.

Preaching: Pastor Hand

New Day Worship & Communion

10:30 a.m.

Preaching: Pastor Ross



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

10 Delp Road
Lancaster, PA 17601

Upcoming Worship Assistant & Volunteer Schedule

March 5

8:00 a.m. — **Lector:** Jennifer Schlener-Thomas; **Greeters:** Bob & Phyllis Hollinger; **Ushers:** Thompson & Betsy McConnell; **Welcome Center:** Bob & Edee Bedford; **A/V:** Tom Chever; **Communion Assistant:** Jo Boltz; **Altar Guild Coordinator:** Debbie Shue & Lori Weaver; **Altar Guild:** Nancy Miller.

10:30 a.m. — **Lector:** Craig Boyhunt; **Greeters:** Mark Burkholder; **Ushers:** Jim & Jane Savidge; **Welcome Center:** Mark & Darla Cardin; **A/V:** Bill Schlener.

New Day — **Communion Assistant:** Sharon Schaefer.

Coffee Bar — Word of Life Deaf Church.

Concert News: St. Peter's will host another concert by Allegro Orchestra on Saturday, March 18, at 7:30 pm. This is a ticketed event. Visit their website, allegrolancaster.org, under "Upcoming Events" to order your tickets. Be sure to select the March 18 concert date. Members of St. Peter's receive a \$5 discount per ticket by entering code "STP" at checkout.

Gifted to Serve The Offering of Time and Talent

Each month your Stewardship committee will bring you a new feature! A member will share how their being part of a ministry helps them spiritually and how it keeps them connected to St. Peter's. You will also hear more about the different ministries and the opportunities to serve your church family and community.

Jordan Lambert

Growing up in Lancaster I was confirmed and married in the Episcopal Church, and had the unusual experience of living for three years at seminary in New York. (My spouse was the student, not me!) This was the time of big changes – the 1980s -- when Episcopal, Lutheran and other denominations came into shared communion. As my family moved from place to place over a number of decades, I was exposed to many different styles of worship and a wide variety of church music. My sense of stewardship caused me to take volunteer roles in each congregation where we were members.

When Karen and I moved back to Lancaster, we chose St. Peter's with its worship and musical style that appeals to both of our backgrounds.

I enjoy serving in the Herald Choir and the Worship Committee because our worship service is the heart of our experience at St. Peter's. The Worship Committee have certainly had interesting tests over the last three years – debate about Communion frequency, COVID safety measures, virtual and parking-lot church, staff changes, and the call of our new music leaders Tom and Deborah Berdos. All of these challenges offered avenues for our leaders to step forward in faith, and I believe that St. Peter's has grown more resilient and exciting because of them. This service to the church rewards my own faith as members come together, renewing our worship life. That realization that we all have God's gifts to contribute is the reason I give back my time as part of my stewardship pledge.

Rev. Craig Ross, Senior Pastor • Sister Dottie Almoney, Director of Education & Outreach

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