

Music at Westminster

2018–2019



Photo by Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra

The music program at Westminster Church continues its journey of ministry, building community, and leading the music of worship together. Choir members are actively involved in every aspect of the church's life and steadfastly devoted and committed to our efforts, for which I'm most grateful, and I look forward to the many opportunities for musical growth and sharing in worship the choirs continually afford the congregation. *Everyone* in the Westminster community is invited and encouraged to become involved. The choirs cannot flourish and effectively serve without you. As the church receives its life from the diverse gifts of its members, so too does each choir. We are a connectional church and we build up our church's body through the wonderful bonding and interaction that take place in small groups such as choirs. Our program is designed

to cultivate the musical contributions to worship of the entire congregation and we have a seat waiting for you!

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the arrival of the Richards, Fowkes and Company's organ in the sanctuary. Designed and handcrafted to be playable and to serve this church and the community literally for centuries to come, it has continually enabled the music of worship and brought to life the finest of the organ literature. I am richly blessed, beyond words, to have the privilege to sit at it each day. It is a wonderful teacher and an inspiration to play. Throughout this year's edition of *Music at Westminster* I'll share photographs of our instrument, pulled from the scores of pictures taken at all times of day over many years. Yes, the organ and our sanctuary continue to take my breath away and I find myself taking impromptu pictures regularly as the light and ambience are always changing, often giving me the sense that I'm taking these for the first time. My thanks to others who have contributed photos to this newsletter.

I invite you to read and learn more about each choir and Westminster's musical opportunities and am always pleased to discuss the possibilities of involvement with anyone interested.



The Choir Schedule

- ❖ Boys' and Girls' Choirs (jointly): Wednesdays, 4:45–5:45 p.m., beginning August 29
- ❖ Brass Choir: To be announced
- ❖ Chancel Choir: Wednesdays, 7:30/8:00–9:30 p.m., beginning August 29
- ❖ Four-in-Hand Ringers: Thursdays, 8:00–8:30 p.m., beginning September 6
- ❖ Handbell Choir: Thursdays, 7:00–8:00 p.m., beginning September 6
- ❖ Rainbow Choir: Tuesdays, 5:30–6:00 p.m., beginning October 2
- ❖ Recorder Ensemble: Thursdays, 6:00–7:00 p.m., beginning September 6
- ❖ Trombone Choir: To be announced
- ❖ Westminster Choristers: Sundays, 4:00–5:00 p.m., beginning August 26
- ❖ Westminster Strings: To be announced
- ❖ Young Musicians' Class: Mondays, 5:30–6:00 p.m., beginning in October 1

History has come full circle for me as Anne's and my older daughter, Jennifer, teaches Suzuki violin (she grew up studying in the Suzuki method with Westminster's own Helen Bryenton) and now the Suzuki Early Childhood Education curriculum (similar in many ways to the instruction and nurture given in our Rainbow Choir and Young Musicians' Class). In spending time with her recently and learning more about her studio and work, I am reminded of the critical importance of offering this type of education to our young people—of passing it on to the next generation.

Creativity is a precious human attribute and singing a most important life skill—activities every person can do and enjoy, though they require nurture and instruction. This is best started at an early age, while the brain is “blooming.”

Rainbow Choir

- Has provided critical training as an introduction to the joys of music and Westminster's choral program for over 30 years
- Geared to children around four years of age through kindergarten
- Provides a good foundation of basic music skills, including music reading and singing
- Activities also include listening to a wide variety of recorded and live music, instrument demonstrations, and our traditional parties, Halloween and J. S. Bach's birthday bash.
- Comfortable and supportive environment with specialized, positive one-on-one interaction

Young Musicians' Class

- Generally intended for young musicians in the first and second grades
- Further development of skills established and nurtured in Rainbow Choir
- Critical transitional link to the Boys' and Girls' Choirs
- Focus is on more advanced music theory and ear training
- Nurturing of acute tuning and healthy vocal production
- Singing together in small groups and adjusting to being part of a musical team; also singing music while reading text
- Continued one-on-one work in areas needing additional time



Photo by Peter Van Eenam

These two groups are the hope and future of sacred music in the church. Participants join centuries of musicians committed to leading the music of worship, following the encouragement of the Psalms. We are delighted to have so many young people involved!

Schola Cantorum

We continue our comprehensive program of musical training for the Boys' and Girls' Choirs. Resources from both the Royal School of Church Music in America and my over 30 years of experience have enabled this effort and I'm pleased to offer this to our capable young singers. Besides the many musical benefits, *Schola Cantorum* honors requests from members of the choirs, and it is exciting, challenging, and rewarding. Study includes increased solfege ("Do-Re-Mi"), music theory, and elements found in the comprehensive singing curriculum *Voice for Life*.

Girls' Choir

- Comprised of 3rd through 8th graders
- Rehearses jointly with the Boys' Choir
- Frequently sings with instrumental accompaniment, whether at Westminster or with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra
- "Hymn of the Week" segment develops a good knowledge of our hymnody
- Development of sightsinging using solfege
- Major emphasis on singing harmony, an essential skill for any singer!
- Occasional fellowship opportunities to have fun and further build community, such as *Pizza, Pipes* (tour of our sanctuary organ), and *Movie*.
- This year's music includes works by Britten, Marcello, Proulx, Purcell, and Reilly (an arrangement of Native American music), among others
- A yearlong unit on ringing handchimes, culminating in ringing with the Handbell Choir (this will involve both the Boys' and Girls' Choirs)



Saint Hildegard von Bingen



Photo by Katherine Harmon

Boys' Choir

- Entering its 31st year, this is East Tennessee's oldest boychoir.
- Comprised of 3rd through 8th graders with unchanged voices
- Rehearses jointly with the Girls' Choir, sharing the same emphases
- Music for this year includes works by Emerson, Handel, Mozart, and Smith, as well as anthems with instrumental accompaniment
- Fellowship opportunities, such as laser tag and ball games

Westminster Choristers

- Older middle through high school students—the culmination of many years of training in the younger choirs
- Choir trips throughout the eastern United States

- Productions of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Godspell*
- Joint projects with the Chancel Choir and the KSO, including excerpts from Handel's *Messiah*, Mahler's *Symphony No. 8*, Mozart's *Missa brevis in C, K. 220* and *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and Puccini's *Turandot*
- Wide range of musical styles and types of instrumental accompaniment
- Rehearses just prior to SHOW and WAMS Sunday afternoons for members' convenience
- Renewed efforts with solfege to further develop sightsinging in parts (we had great fun with this in every rehearsal this past year!)
- Several collaborations with the Chancel Choir this year, as well as music by Aston, J. S. Bach, Caldara, Hampton, Medema, Owens, Pergolesi, Whitbourn, and a selection from *Godspell*



Photo by Pamela Ruitter-Feenstra

Brass Choir

- Founded in the summer of 1982 and an integral part of worship throughout the year
- Intended for advanced players
- Antiphonal music and works for brass, choir, percussion, and organ
- Music by most mainstream brass composers, including J. S. Bach, Giovanni Gabrieli, Walter Hartley, Johann Pezel, Gottfried Reiche, Samuel Scheidt, and Richard Strauss
- Occasional accompaniment of the Chancel Choir
- Appearances in the community as benevolent outreach

Trombone Choir

- Performs a unique part of the brass literature, ranging from transcriptions of madrigals and choral motets to twentieth-century American music
- Will function independently of the Brass Choir

Recorder Ensemble

- Established as an intergenerational group of soprano, alto, tenor, and bass recorder enthusiasts
- Solo, duet, and ensemble repertoire with varied instrumental accompaniment, including harpsichord, and accompaniments for various choirs

Handbell Choir

- Founded in November 1981 as an intergenerational group
- Repertoire planned for the year includes music by Austin, Debussy, Gingrich, Langlais, Marker, Moglebust, Purcell, Pysh, and Sherman.



The Great division rollerboard, a frictionless part of the key action that laterally transmits motion from the keyboard to the windchest and pipes.
Photo by Peter Van Eenam

- Music for instruments and bells, and choir and bells is also planned.
- A joint project with the members of the Boys' and Girls' Choirs, who will play handchimes
- Occasional hymn introductions and other service music

Ringing handbells is a lot of fun and the type of musical activity that meets each person at their own level of proficiency. *We are always looking for new ringers.* Membership in this choir is open to anyone, middle school age and older, with the ability to read music.

Four-in-Hand Ringers

Four-in-hand ringing is an advanced technique where the ringer holds two bells in each hand. Typically, such a group will have four ringers, and while our group presently has the required number, it is possible to accommodate an experienced player with an interest.

Westminster Strings

- Another intergenerational group, founded in 2000, and comprised of serious amateur and professional string players
- Has performed regularly for worship in its early years and more recently mostly when string accompaniments are needed for choral works



The Chancel Choir and Westminster Choristers singing Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Missa brevis in C*, K. 220 for worship on November 12, 2017. Photo by Renee Wieschuegel

Chancel Choir

The Westminster Chancel Choir is an intensely devoted group of hardworking musicians committed to the highest form of music making and to every aspect of the church. We are privileged to meet each week as friends to immerse ourselves in fine sacred choral literature for the purpose of serving the church.

About the choir:

- The primary adult choral ensemble of the church, providing musical leadership throughout the year, mainly at the 11:00 service, and for all festival services
- Advanced literature drawn from centuries of great music
- Major works sung include the Brahms, Duruflé, Fauré, Mozart, Rutter, and Verdi *Requiems*; Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*; Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* and *Hymn to St. Cecilia*; Mozart's *Missa brevis in C*, K. 220 and *Mass in c*, K. 427; and the Vivaldi *Gloria*. Composers of other major works include J. S. Bach, Handel, Schubert, and Vaughan Williams.
- Production of Gian-Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*

- This year's repertoire will include works by J. S. Bach, Barber, Beethoven, Britten, Daley, Duruflé, Hancock, Mendelssohn, Mozart, O'Regan, Parry, Pärt, Ramsey, Stanford, Stevens, Vaughan Williams, Weaver, and Whitbourn, among others.

Rehearsals are from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. the first two Wednesdays of each month and 8:00 to 9:30 all remaining Wednesdays.

Summer Choir

- Established in 2011 by choral enthusiasts in the Chancel Choir, Westminster Choristers, and the congregation
- Intended to provide choral leadership for worship during the summer months, augmenting the contributions of soloists and small ensembles
- Ideal for a person interested in singing, but without the typical long-term commitment

Musica Organi

Westminster Church is very fortunate to have two fine organs: the Richards, Fowkes and Co.'s Opus 7 in the sanctuary and the Lunsford organ in the chapel, and we are pleased to host an annual series of organ recitals, *Musica Organi*, for which we bring the finest organists from around the world to our church, community, and region. Many thanks to our loyal audience and everyone who has ever attended and supported the series over the years!



Photo by Martin Rakich-Kelly

Our nineteenth season features:

- Christa Rakich, concert organist and harpsichordist, on Friday, November 2, 2018, at 8:00 p.m.
- Jens Korndörfer, German-born concert organist, on Friday, February 8, 2019, at 8:00 p.m.



Photo by Foster & Associates

Many thanks always to Jim and Bettie Mason for establishing the *Musica Organi* website and for their ongoing devotion to the series and to Lee Ingram and Michael Richards for their countless contributions of graphic art expertise in producing its printed materials. I am ever indebted to my late aunt, Marjorie Van Eenam Butcher, for her continued underwriting of the series, enabling her and my dream and vision of such an outstanding series to become an ongoing reality at Westminster.

Please visit www.musicaorgani.org to learn more about the series, to view past programs, and to learn more about the Richards, Fowkes organ, including photos, the stoplist and specifications, and commentary.

iListener = Informed Listener

This is a series of informal study/discussion evenings devoted to musical topics ranging from music reading essentials to music to be heard for the first time at Westminster. The intent is to elevate the listener's experience in worship and concerts by sharing interesting insight and background. What we know about the music does influence how we hear it!

The Friends of Music of Westminster Church

- Established by the Session in 1981 to augment the Worship, Music, and the Arts portion of Westminster's operating budget
- An account funded by unsolicited gifts from members and friends and by freewill offerings at concerts
- The sole source of funding for choir concerts and special musical events

Many thanks to everyone who has helped support Friends of Music and its worthy goals of nurturing fellowship and providing outreach through music!



Thank you for learning about the music program at Westminster Church and for any interest you may have in joining this ministry. Please contact me with any questions at (865) 584-3957, ext. 109 or peterv.organist@gmail.com.

Peter J. Van Eenam
Organist and Choirmaster



Photo by Peter Van Eenam