



Newsletter

The monthly joint publication of the NPM Arlington and DC chapters
Fostering the art of musical liturgy

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St. Cecilia, pray for us!



Article submissions:

Do you have an event coming up in your parish? Do you have an idea to share with other Chapter Members? Please submit all articles and inquiries by the 15th of the month to: Katie Evans at music@ccjgs.org . All submissions subject to review. Thank you.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Hopefully many of you were able to participate in the members meeting in mid-September which was entirely virtual this year. While the meeting was beautifully organized and it was wonderful to hear from the leadership team at the national level, this is not what most encouraged me as a member of NPM. Parallel to the main substance of the meeting, a very robust chat conversation was also taking place. Attendees were introducing themselves, saying hello to friends, congratulating those who won awards and observing chat silence while names were scrolling during the *in memoriam* portion of the meeting. While we were unable to hear each other, I could feel a chorus of

voices singing at the same time which brought great comfort and a spiritual connection with all the members logged into the meeting.

While reading the conversation between members, I was reminded of the primary reason I continue to be a part of NPM. The human connections I have made are irreplaceable. While I have undoubtedly grown as a pastoral musician as a result of NPM and the rich programming it offers, especially during the conventions, what keeps me coming back to these events both nationally and locally are the deep and lasting friendships that have been initiated and cultivated throughout the years. Being connected to a community and interacting with peers and colleagues is a vital part of our work and in our faith.

I'm certain that without NPM I would have very few, if any, meaningful friendships with other church musicians. Working weekends and unconventional hours do not afford easy opportunities to meet colleagues in the church music world.

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While the novel coronavirus may be keeping us from regularly gathering in person, we can meet online when possible and even in person when it feels safe. So, don't ignore the yearning for human connection no matter how difficult it may seem right now. Our organization continues to change and evolve. Hang in there! These growing pains are inevitable and necessary. We need each other, and we need NPM.

- Amy Massey, Washington D.C. Chapter Director

CHOIR REHEARSALS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

The local chapters posed this question to their directors: How are they resuming rehearsals during this time? Between virtual and in-person, somehow our members managed to stay connected!

Virtual Choir:

The first Wednesday after Easter Sunday I emailed my choir and said that we would begin meeting via Zoom. We gathered and saw each other for the first time in a month, had the chance to talk about what was going on in each of our lives, found out how we were faring during this very stressful time, and prayed together. Everyone enjoyed it so we planned to meet again the following week and have been meeting weekly ever since.

“Choristers need to be singing and using their instruments so that when we can return to singing together, we are not starting from scratch.”

During these past 6 months we have done a lot of vocal technique. Two choir members are singing teachers and they have taken turns sharing how to breathe, proper alignment and correct vocal placement. Even though all but the presenter was muted, everyone actively participated. As a director, I greatly enjoyed being able to look out at my choir and see them attentively singing. Some members commented that it was the first time they had sung at all since the start of the pandemic. As wonderful as this was, everyone was still singing alone in their home and the joy of a communal joined voice was missing.

Next we decided to work on a virtual choir video. At rehearsals we would break into three rooms via Zoom to hold sectionals, then come back together and sing through what we rehearsed by me sharing my screen with all to play the accompaniment tracks for the virtual video. We finally felt secure in the music and everyone made their individual videos, then sent them off to someone to mix and create our video. In truth, I cried when I saw the video with all my choir members on the same screen singing together. My parish was so moved by the video that we have begun fundraising to create a virtual prelude for Christmas, and possibly beyond. But we still were not singing *together*.

The next step for me is to find a program that will allow us to sing together at the same time without the delay and latency of Zoom. A colleague introduced me to a free program called Jamulus, which is a non Wi-Fi app. I can't sugar coat it, the set up for these apps is very complicated. It requires a dedicated server, external, hardwired condenser microphones for each choir member, and hardwired headphones. The difficulties with Zoom is that wi-fi creates a lag for sound that is transmitted over the internet. Jamulus bypasses all that by plugging in to the source. This technology is compatible with Windows and Mac devices, but not a mobile device or ipad. The cost for a microphone and headphones can be minimum of \$60 for each member. While I am still discerning these options with my choir, I want to ask if there is anyone reading this who has experience with these programs and if they can speak directly to the pros and cons? Inquiring minds want to know!

The bottom line about choirs and Covid-19. Choristers need to be singing and using their instruments so that when we can return to singing together, we are not starting from scratch. Even though we can't hear each other singing together, we can follow the leader about vocal technique, we can see each other, and share stories. And pray.

Jayne Traynor Rose
Pastoral Associate for Music and Liturgy
Our Lady of Mercy Church, Potomac, MD

CHOIR REHEARSALS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

In-Person Choir:

After a six-month hiatus, I resumed leading in person choir rehearsals at Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church, in Sterling, VA. All of our Masses are cantor only for the foreseeable future, so there is not a lot to rehearse! However, I saw this as a wonderful opportunity to work on music skills and community building. I've structured the rehearsal to be the months go on, I'm sure I'll interests of the participants! In need to make the faith-sharing to have some members of Christ our inaugural meeting.

Right now, each rehearsal starts wear our masks and sit in a sing the hymn, chant the psalm, Magnificat. After Evening fellowship, each answering a faith sharing question. Last week, I asked the choir members what they found to be life-giving during the months they spent at home. This week I will ask them how COVID-19 affected their prayer life. Eventually we will move towards meditating on the Sunday readings. After this time of sharing, I give the choir background information on a hymn of the week, and then we quickly go over some musical terms and music reading activities. Rehearsal closes by running through the Sunday hymns, praying together, and offering up our personal intentions.

-Claire Schweppe
Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church, Sterling, Va

“I asked the choir members what they found to be life-giving during the months they spent at home.”

sort of a “catch-all” of topics, but as be able to refine it based on the fact, I have already realized that I group bilingual, as it was a blessing the Redeemer’s Spanish Choir at

by praying Evening Prayer. We socially distanced manner while we and listen to recordings of the Prayer, we spend time together in

Prayer, we spend time together in fellowship, each answering a faith sharing question. Last week, I asked the choir members what they found to be life-giving during the months they spent at home. This week I will ask them how COVID-19 affected their prayer life. Eventually we will move towards meditating on the Sunday readings. After this time of sharing, I give the choir background information on a hymn of the week, and then we quickly go over some musical terms and music reading activities. Rehearsal closes by running through the Sunday hymns, praying together, and offering up our personal intentions.

Virtual Liturgy Day

Music, Liturgy, and Sacramental Celebrations during COVID-19

Since the COVID-19 pandemic reached our communities, what lessons have we learned about liturgy and the sacraments? What is it teaching us about ministry and our parish communities? What best practices can we share? As an NPM chapter family, we gather to reflect on these and other important questions that need to be considered before returning to “normal.”

Date: **Saturday, November 7, 2020**
10:00 AM - 12:00 NOON
Cost: **Free!**

Michael Ruzicki, Training and Events Manager at Liturgy Training Publications, will be our presenter for this special virtual presentation.

Register by scanning the QR Code (left).



NPM 2.0 A Vision For Our Future

National Virtual Members Meeting Held September 16, 2020

Anyone who has ever attended an NPM conference knows that one of the highlights is the annual members meeting. It is a moment of pride and unity for us. Though we could not meet in person, the virtual members meeting held this month did not disappoint.

Last month, we were informed that Steve Petrunak is stepping down as executive director. He has done much to move the organization forward and leaves it on a steady path as we implement the goals of NPM 2.0. Bob

McCarty will act as interim director until a new director is found. Bob comes to the job with the strongly held belief that our ministry is essential in healing a broken and wounded world. He feels that music helps us to be united in the Body of Christ. We are in good hands during this transition time.

The many “wins” of the year:

- The establishment of a Diversity Forum
- A well-attended “unconventional” convention
- New “Skill Builders” being planned for July 2021
- Ministry Mondays
- Thursday Thoughts at 3:00
- Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts
- New Website & New Resources
- Active social media presence
- New dues structure to include local chapter memberships (more to come)

The annual meeting always includes awards. While our dedicated colleagues in St. Louis received well-deserved recognition for their heroics as they transformed an entire conference from live to virtual in record time, there was one award recipient who makes this chapter burst with pride.

Tom Stehle, the director of music at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in DC was honored as Pastoral Musician of the Year. Many of you know Tom as our fearless music director during two papal visits, as an NPM DC board member, or perhaps even as a clinician at one of

our workshops. We have been the blessed beneficiaries of Tom’s wisdom and talent for many years in this archdiocese.

In his remarks, Tom mentioned the words of Archbishop Wilton Gregory, who courageously commented on the unjust actions of those in power during the Black Lives Matter march this summer, pointing out that working for truth is essential in our church. Tom told us that NPM has not only made him a better musician but has helped him better become the presence of Christ for others. We are extremely proud of our brother.

Congratulations, Tom.

We also said “goodbye” to Steve Petrunak and Kathleen Haley as they move on. Kathleen has worked as director of membership for our organization for more than 20 years. Many of you have probably had contact with her. She is known for handling any problem quickly, efficiently, and with a smile. Both she and Steve will be missed.

In closing, it was pointed out that our future is bright, and that YOU are the future of our organization as well as the liturgical life of our church. We are called to continue to foster the art of musical liturgy, to help our people in full-active participation, and to help bring them closer to Christ. United in ministry and prayer, we can accomplish much.

- Remi F. Bauer
NPM DC Membership Coordinator

CONVENTION RECAP FOR CHAPTER MEMBERS!!



The NPM 2020 Virtual Convention *Called from Living Waters* was wonderful. For those who were unable to attend, and for those who would like to recall or dig deeper, NPM/DC is offering a Convention Recap.

First, watch the Opening Event with Bishop Seitz's inspiring words of encouragement and support.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9BLOddeVwo>

NPM/DC & Arlington Virtual Events:

Tuesday, October 13, 7:00 p.m. Social Hour and Discussion: What are you doing with choir rehearsals and/or gatherings? Come for the full session or drop when you can: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76866084596?pwd=R2N6SXo5azlDcEhGK2ZEblR4a0psdz09>

Monday, October 26, 7:00 p.m. - CONVENTION RE-CAP!

Rehearsal Techniques for Adult and Children's Choirs presented by Paul French. Paul French offers thirty immediate and practical fixes that will assist choir directors in running more energized and efficient rehearsals. To be discussed are topics surrounding vocal warm-ups, recruitment and retention of singers, repertoire selection, score preparation, intonation issues, and helping your choirs to sing more musically.

Please click here to register for the link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F6DYMJV>

Wednesday, October 28, 12:00 Noon - Repeat of *Rehearsal Techniques for Adult and Children's Choirs* presented by Paul French (same as above)

Saturday November 7, 10:00 a.m. - Virtual Liturgy Day with Michael Ruzicki, Training and Events Manager at LTP. *Since COVID-19 hit our communities, what lessons have we learned about liturgy and the sacraments? What is it teaching us about ministry and our parish communities? What best practices can we share? As an NPM Chapter family, we gather to reflect on these and other important questions that need to be considered before returning to "normal."*

To register: please scan the QR Code on page 4 of this Newsletter, or click here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScTksxAvJnSLvXXieSV5GrzcFNbGwflVQR52qMdB0ShrsgRDw/viewform>



JOB LISTING:

St. Dominic Church Principal Organist Accepting applications (now). Desired start-work: August 2020 Interested candidate should contact the St Dominic Parish Director of Music, Liturgy and Liturgical Ministries for additional information (interested candidates will assist the process by including their résumé and two professional references/contacts with the initial contact message). JC Cantrell, MMus, MS, CC and CT Colonel, USAF (retired) Director of Music, Liturgy and Liturgical Ministries St. Dominic Catholic Church Cell/text: 703-346-9969
www.stdominicchurch.org/

Resources:

What is NPM 2.0, A Vision for our Future? A video link is available here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NoEU3kzIFEI>



When We've Lost our Balance

Yours is the music of the planets spinning
 In harmony.

We can't seem to blend our voices.

The director sighs,
 the sopranos are pointing at each other,
 the tenors stopped singing.

What are we to do?

Oh, music is messy.

Teach us to take a step back, take a deep breath, smile
 and begin again.

Humble our hearts and voices
 so that we can listen to the balance and choose
 to soften our sound into one voice.

Allow us to serve the others by gently releasing
 each note into the harmony,
 rather than singing like it is solo time.

You teach so much in these choir pews,
 and we are grateful because what we do
 here is a reflection of our life with you.

You love us best when we are humble enough to care
 about something greater than our own agenda.

Amen.

- (from *Choir Prayers*, Volume 3, ocp.org/choir-prayers-volume-3)



Hats Off

The TV Mass for Shut-ins at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception continues to be broadcast each Sunday via YouTube and the CW Channel.

Since choirs are not singing during the pandemic, we salute Crossley Hawn and Jason Perry, and accompanist, Andrew Vu for providing beautiful musical prayer.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/marysshine/featured>



National Association of Pastoral Musicians

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