

MUSIC COMMITTEE MINUTES

MONDAY, JANUARY 7TH 2008

IN ATTENDANCE: Linda Brock (Chair), Heather Cooper, Carolyn Peterson, Leslie Lord, Pat Hilbrink, Ian Lane, Camille Haberland, Rob Aughtry, Alan Payne, Jason Snow, Melissa Osborne

ABSENT: Chris Cowl, Stan Schelhorn, Laura Zotian, Laura Mitchell, Dave Leahey

Linda Brock called the meeting to order and offered a word of prayer. The meeting began with a special guest. Susan Gray, Director of Music at Dranesville UMC came to the meeting at Linda's invitation to talk to the Music Committee and to Melissa Osborne (Worship Purpose) and Jason Snow (Contemporary Service Task Force) about the transitions and responsibilities that her department and congregation navigated to provide a successful Contemporary Service.

The music for the Dranesville Contemporary Service is provided by members of the church who originally had a bluegrass band and now performs as the praise band. Initially, they used their own instruments (still do) and equipment was purchased basically to support the praise band and Contemporary Service but was the property of the music department. When the Contemporary Service was begun their committee did all of the same research that we have done. When the decision was made to offer a contemporary service, Dranesville's services looked much like ours with their congregation "graying" as ours is.

First, they had to decide the goal of who they wanted to reach. The obvious groups being the 20-somethings, the "un-churched" and the "de-churched". Second, they needed to decide how and when they would provide the new service. Third, once they decided when to put the service, they put in place a re-evaluation of the service (approx. 6 months later), of service attendance and all details to see if changes should be made. Susan said that the attendees were not necessarily the people who they expected to attend.

Susan emphasized the give and take that was needed for a successful offering. Decisions had to be made for expenditures for the praise band, namely what they actually buy to support the band and the service ie sound systems, wiring, media, etc. The music for the contemporary service had a separate budget from Susan's regular music budget but she, as director of music, had and has full responsibility for overseeing expenditures. Susan is also responsible for an adult choir, a bell choir and a children's choir with both traditional and contemporary service formats. The main thing that we all came away with is that the Contemporary Service did not negatively impact the existing music department (staff or participants) because the praise band leads their worship.

A discussion was held after Susan left and the group agreed that the information that Susan provided was informative although not much different than what we already had begun.

As the meeting continued the music committee was informed of a meeting in November when the directors and Jason Snow had met. During that meeting the directors came up with a possible rehearsal scenario, devised to allow for all groups having time to rehearse at the same time, making space for a contemporary/praise band service. We were informed that the service is proposed to be taking place on Sunday evenings at 5:30pm. (It has since been passed by the Church Council) A concern was voiced that Sunday afternoons for the past 15 years has been reserved for youth/children's choir rehearsals! The proposed schedule will force the Chapel and Junior Choirs to meet at the same time in order to keep rehearsals on Sunday afternoons. It also forces rehearsals to start earlier than currently scheduled. Ian and Camille have agreed to share the Choir Room and Sanctuary space for rehearsals of their choirs from 4 - 5 pm. Among other concerns, youth who are involved in Handbells, Chapel Choir, the Contemporary Service and UMYF will need to be at the church from 3pm. until 8 pm. Youth and their parents may be forced to make choices which may negatively impact Chapel Choir/Handbell participation. **THIS IS A STRONG CONCERN SHARED BY ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS.**

The committee commended the directors on their willingness to alter their established schedules and acknowledged their concerns. Camille will be on the task force for the Contemporary Service and we are confident that she will positively help this process so that our Music Department will continue to provide the excellent music programs and Christian music education that we have come to expect and at the same time allow for the creation of a new worship option.

The meeting continued thru the agenda, beginning with the Director's reports. Ian Lane conducted this portion of the meeting in Dave Leahey's absence because of illness. The substance of Ian's report concerned the budget cuts and impact on the programs that could be offered during 2008. Ian handed out two documents illustrating the 2007 budget and the restricted donations paid in and out. The resulting discussions absorbed the better part of the meeting. Dave has serious doubts about the Music Department's ability to continue with the special programs that have been offered over the past 3-4 years because of the lack of funding. Bringing in the instrumentalists, soloists and music needed to provide quality programs are expensive and the funds are not there. He expresses concern (and the committee understands) that most of the congregation will not understand the absence of the special programs and instrumental groups, especially since many of the larger programs offered in the last 18 months or so have been underwritten by generous donations. These cannot be relied upon as the sole financing of the music programs. During the discussion that followed the committee tried to come up with a way to communicate this to the congregation in the most diplomatic way possible. It was decided to begin by speaking with our organizations and allowing the explanations to run carefully from that point outward. The music committee is united with the directors in the desire to continue with quality musical offerings, even if there are fewer of them.

As far as the rest of the agenda went, little was discussed. The choir robes are in, thanks to the granting of our requested endowment. However, the grants for advertising and for handbell maintenance were denied. The committee feels that a strong look must be made

on the church's general funds, in the future, to assist the music department in these very necessary items. Also discussed was the possible participation of the music organizations in some of Fairfax City events, ie 4th of July Parade, the Fall Festival and the Festival of Lights (Christmas). Alan Payne has been involved because of the Scouts and he, Camille and Dave participated in the Fall Festival this past year. The committee agrees that participation on some level will be beneficial not only for publicity of our organizations' events, but for community outreach. We will be discussing participating as the times arise for planning purposes.

A final (non-agenda) item was discussed and this is the groups concern over the order of worship. The committee would like to see a re-ordering of the beginning of the service to allow for quiet meditation and preparation time during the prelude. It was acknowledged that the choirs are often the worst offenders of noise during this time and Linda will propose to the Worship Purpose area a re-ordering of the service to have the "news" and "bulletin highlights" accomplished before the prelude. Then the minister could ask for the congregation to "be in an attitude of".

The balance of the agenda was tabled for a later meeting. The next meeting will be on February 20th. Leslie Lord closed the meeting with a prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

ADDENDUM: FEBRUARY 20TH WILL NOT WORK FOR DAVE OR IAN. I WILL BE LOOKING FOR ANOTHER DATE FOR OUR MEETING.

In His Service,

Linda Brock