

## Music Ministry report 2024-2025

Respectfully submitted by Interim Music Director, Steve Barton

Since I accepted this position 5 months ago in August 2024, I have happily experienced a steep learning curve in order to build relationships, learn new technologies and discover from the participants who create our music ministry how the experience of music and worship happens at St. Michael and All Angels (SMAA). It has reminded me a bit of my very first professional year as public high school choral director in 1980. The students taught me more than I taught them, I suspect!

All first years in any music position are primarily ones of learning and listening while at the same time presenting opportunities for music making which make allowance for musical and spiritual growth for all involved. Calling on one's experience, adaptability and flexibility are at the heart of any successful first year. Applying such considerations are as vital in relating to a congregation as they are for relating to and coming to know those who do the singing and playing (and directing, KNOW THYSELF!) of the music each week.

I am occasionally asked what my vision is for music at SMAA. My answer is always the same. **5 months into the experience, I am still trying to figure that out.** Ask me again next August and I will have a better idea of how to answer the question. By then, I will have some concrete thought about how to move forward. In the meantime, a few principles guide me in leading this ministry.

1. Create a spiritual experience with the ensembles which allows them to be their best selves. Help them to understand the import musically and spiritually of what they do and encourage them to be proud of what they are doing.
2. Always remember that your number one job is to support the ministry of the rector and ALL staff members at SMAA. Be a team player and help everyone do their jobs better.
3. Be respectful, grateful and helpful to every member of the musical staff that works here including our wonderful organist/accompanist, Bill Williams, and our more than capable staff singers: Codey, Valeria, Ken and Dana.
4. Strive to experience church as congregational members do. Lead, yes, but always worship with them.
5. Remember that good musical quality facilitates the freeing of the Holy Spirit to do its work. Do your best at all times and trust God to do the rest.

What does the future hold for music a SMAA? Probably such things as spiritual retreats for ministry participants, congregational experiences which allow all of us to expand our love of music, our faith and our encounter with church. Special musical concerts? Yes, I'm sure. I will have a better idea of all of this as my first year continues. For now, I am trying to enjoy the musical experiences, the people and the church in such a way that my heart continues to become more engaged and enfolded into the spiritual life here.

I hope you all know how talented and dedicated the folks who present this ministry really are. They are truly exceptional. I continue to learn and am grateful to be here. Happy 2025 to all. I am excited to see where all this may go.

Sincerely, Steve Barton, Interim Music Director

