

Annual Report: Music Program 2016 - Karen A. Hindenlang

St. John's parish is blessed with many devoted volunteer musicians, and together we all greatly appreciate the assistance of the staff, support of the clergy, aid of the wardens, and encouragement of the congregation in our shared music ministry offered to the glory of God.

In 2016, the Chancel Choir took in four new members. Three are recently arrived in Ithaca (Jeff Bricker, Sarah Clark, and Virginia Greene) one is a child of the parish, Skye Steuteville. Seasonal help came from choir friends Connie Stirling-Engman, Amanda York, and Sarah Thoburn Welch, as well as other choir relatives. All these singers joined more than a dozen continuing members plus our four new choral scholars (see the last Eagle newsletter). We have room for many more participants, and actively encourage singers from Middle School through Retirement to join us in 2017.

The Balcony Bells played in 8 services, ringing in the Stewart Park Pavilion, as well as our chancel and balcony. Eleven players in various combinations rang during the administration of Communion in several services, offered a number of preludes, provided all the music for our Good Friday service, and accompanied a choir anthem. Amber Massa-Crowley, Mike Roman and I all conducted in various contexts. New and experienced ringers of all ages are welcome in 2017.

Singing in 41 services, our Chancel Choir offered 55 anthems, an increase over last year as we sang multiple anthems in 9 services. A highlight was our Advent Lessons & Carols which included five anthems, including a newly published work written especially for the choir by Crawford R. Thoburn.

Nearly half the anthems were new to the choir, and fully half of them were sung *a cappella*. This is a remarkable achievement for a relatively small parish choir. Our anthems represented a diversity of sacred music, with 25% from each of four categories: compositions of the Baroque-Renaissance, Classic-Romantic, and 20th-21st centuries, plus arrangements of hymns, folk tunes and spirituals.

Parish instrumentalists enhanced our worship, and we thank Nancy Siemon (oboe), Robin Steuteville (French horn), Zeek Smith (piano), Zoe Titlebaum (flute) and Carrie D'Aprix (violin) for their gift of music. Instrumentalists are always welcome to contribute to our services; please see me for details.

I played the organ in 47 services, and continued to explore the resources of the instrument. Major repair was made with the replacement of the motor controlling the expression shades on the swell division. (Stop by the bench, and I will demonstrate!) Special thanks are owed to Fr. A. Richard Strauss for his ongoing and very attentive care of our pipe organ, which shall turn 50 this year.

Amber Massa-Crowley joined Mike Roman in skillful collaborative coordination of the bell groups. Dr. George Damp continued generously assisting as sub organist in his home parish. Wells Professor *emeritus* Crawford R. Thoburn served invaluable as volunteer guest conductor, vocal coach and composer. We owe heartfelt thanks to them, and all of our ensemble members and soloists.

With ongoing thanks to our benevolent and visionary sponsors, the Choral Scholars program will begin its third year this spring, helping to sustain our musical heritage and encourage a new generation of church musicians. Gifts to St. John's marked "Choral Scholars" are reserved for a special non-budget fund supporting this program; additional donations are welcome and needed.

More information on the activities of our music program may be found on a website that I maintain and update regularly: <https://sites.google.com/site/stjohnithacachoir/home> .