

Worship and Music Committee Minutes

Wednesday, April 9, 2008

Participants: David Roden, Anne Pickett, Rosa Fullerton, Paul Stetsenko, Becky Davies, Jan Dickerson, Sherrie Cathcart and Carolyn Carmack.

David Roden opened the meeting with prayer.

Month in Review

The Palm Sunday service had a few minor problems: the palms were frozen in transport; reserving the front pew on the piano side for new members conflicted with the needs of the children's choir; and the lack of music after the receiving the new members made for an awkward transition to the scripture reading.

The afternoon Pontius Pilate and Rossini service went well. There were lots of positive comments. Some people expressed regret that they invited their Jewish friends to the program. A significant number of people also thought the readings were good, but too long. The length of the program caused 30+ people to leave at intermission and made people late for their Bible study class. It was also felt that a reception was needed after the program. \$876 were collected for the Music Offering account.

The ushers had problems locating the bulletins for the Maundy Thursday service and ended up coping some in the office. Paul's Kiddush and the men's quartet were appreciated. The Kiddush might have been more appropriate as part of the Good Friday service. Several people wondered why we didn't include Tenebrae in the service. About 100 people attended and the service was 45 minutes long.

The Good Friday service was attended by about 50 people and also was 45 minutes long. Including young people in the stripping of the sanctuary helped to improve attendance. The Saturday Easter Vigil was not well attended. A total of 21 people participated, but only six of them were not worship leaders (ushers, pastors, lay participants). Both services would have benefited from choir member support and special music. The three mid-week services also were top heavy with pastor leadership. More lay participation in readings and prayers seemed appropriate.

The flowers for the Easter services were very nice, but perhaps a bit too big. They cost \$440 which left \$1,057 for the Kenya mission work. The early service was lightly attended, but the 11:00 service was standing room only. Ken Neiman did a great job finding people seats. Perhaps as much as 50 percent of the people in the 11:00 service were not regular worship participants. We need to encourage more of our regular members to attend the 8:30 service in future years. We might consider changing the early service to 9:00 AM on Easter to make it more attractive.

Month Ahead

Communion will be served on April 13th and May 18th. A post-card was sent to elders and deacons not currently installed to invite them to serve. Several positive responses were received. Unfortunately, the card did not ask for volunteers to help prepare communion. Since serving the transept is difficult for one person, a number of options for addressing the problem were discussed.

April 20th is Youth Sunday and new members will be received on April 27th. The Children's Vivaldi presentation and dinner is scheduled for 5:00 PM on May 4th. May 11th is Pentecost Sunday and Confirmation Sunday. Two of the confirmands will be baptized on that day. Special arrangements will be made to enable Barbara from the nursery to attend worship and see her grandson baptized and confirmed. May 18th is the last Sunday with two services.

Other Business

Casey Fitzgerald was excited about the support and financial contribution from the Worship and Music Committee for the music rotation as part of the fall Creation Station program. Elizabeth O'Brien will arrange the C.E. component for M&M week. Paul Stetsenko has selected the musical.

Paul Stetsenko and Carolyn Carmack presented a motion to purchase choir room chairs and music stands using earnings from endowments. The motion was approved and will be forwarded to the Administration and Finance Committee and the Session for approval.

The Advent schedule for 2008 was reviewed and approved. The first Sunday in Advent will be Thanksgiving Day weekend. Arrangements for decorating the sanctuary were discussed. Names of possible people who might take over from Gale Grindstaff and oversee the effort were discussed. Lessons and Carols will be celebrated at the 11:00 AM service on December 7th and will focus on American Christmas Carols. The Christmas Pageant and Opera is scheduled for 5:00 PM on December 14th. Tandy Martin is assisting Paul Stetsenko in writing the Christmas Opera. Festival Sunday will be on December 21st. The staff raised a question about the tone of the Christmas Eve service. In past years this service has been subdued in comparison with Festival Sunday. The Committee felt an intimate and elegant service featuring flute, oboe, and harp was preferred over a fanfare of brass instruments.

As a result of setting the Advent schedule, the Alexandria Symphony was offered December 7th or December 21st for their children's Christmas concert in our sanctuary. It is expected they will want to sell tickets to support the program.

Paul Stetsenko reported that work on the organ has begun. The contractor currently plans to complete the work in May. A dedication service for the organ, piano, and sanctuary furnishings will be scheduled for the last half of September after the Redskins schedule is set. The program will include 45 minutes of piano and 45 minutes of organ music performed by Paul Stetsenko, followed by a reception.

The worship timing chart was reviewed. All of the Holy Week services were an hour or less. This is partially due to fewer extras and announcements. If the result of the Officer Intreat leads to more presentations on mission projects, it will become more difficult to keep the service to 65 minutes or less. The Committee thought that sung prayer and scripture was an effective way of streamlining the liturgy and emphasizing the quality music people appreciate about Westminster. The timing chart also demonstrates that the pastors have been making an effort to reduce the length of their sermons. For Sundays with Communion or other significant additions, 15 minute sermons seem appropriate.

Paul Stetsenko brought a number of names of people who might be invited to join one of the worship or music guilds. Gail Donley and the New Member and Assimilation Committee is also looking for opportunities for new members to get involved. An article for the Chronicle was also suggested. The committee will identify other people who might be willing to serve.

The worship and liturgy adult education class has been set for November 9th, 16th, and 23rd. The first class will focus on liturgy, the second preaching, and the third music.

Paul Stetsenko received a request from David Erwin to allow his high school handbell choir to participate in the worship service on June 15th. Church members will provide accommodations for 16 people on Saturday night.

The Alexandria Choral Society has asked to use the sanctuary for a program of “All that Jazz” on May 11th at 4:00 PM. Tickets will be sold for the event. The committee approved the use.

David Roden closed the meeting with prayer.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 14, 2008 at 7:30 PM.