

Music Advisory Team Report – To the Congregation

After the departure of our long-time Music Director, Interim Pastor Phil Blackwell convened a Music Advisory Team (MAT). The MAT's task was to serve as a resource for the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. The Team (Paul Melrose, chair; Ann Herrold-Peterson, David Kinyon, Donalea Dinsmore, Laura Wendt, and Tina Lang) heard from current musicians and members of our congregation in a number of listening sessions over the last few months. We have compiled the notes and opinions from all of you that offered feedback on the FUMC music program of the past, the present, and our dreams for the future of music at FUMC. Our full report is going to the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, and we wanted you, the fellowship of First United Methodist Church, to have this brief summary of what we heard.

The consensus is that we would like to maintain our high quality of music ministry, while emphasizing the authentic, spiritual content of music that will engage the senses and connect to everyone present. Our congregation and our music ministry have a strong background in traditional church music, choir, organ, and instrumental ensembles.

There is strong support to maintain these expressions of worship, but not at the expense of adding diversity in our music ministry, such as

- Continual invitations to congregants to join in making worship/music
- Enlarging the circle of music presenters to include children, youth and young adults
- Presenting different music genres and different art forms
- Expanding music ministry, to enhance Sunday 10:30 service and Come As You Are Worship on Wednesday mornings.

There is also strong support that music ministry be adequately staffed to provide the breadth of music envisioned.

We heard many expressions of gratitude and appreciation for Ross Cowing's time and talents, and we are grateful that he has agreed to continue in his present role. This will allow our congregation to more fully establish our new beginnings, and the role of music ministries in our congregation and our community. During this time of transition, it is our hope that we can continue these rich conversations and be open to where God leads us.

July 20, 2016

Ross Cowing Assumes Director of Music Position

We are pleased to announce that Ross Cowing has accepted the position of Director of Music at First United Methodist Church. Ross has been serving in this position on an interim basis since the beginning of the year. Through the months of pastoral transition and the work of the Music Advisory Team, Ross has had the opportunity to explore combining the role of Organist and Pianist that he has filled for many years and the wider responsibilities that the Director of Music entails. It seemed to Ross that it was a good fit!

Rev. Mark Fowler responded to the news saying, "I am delighted that Ross has decided to assume this role. In my first weeks among you, Ross has been a marvelous colleague and a vital part of our worship team. His creativity and excellence as a musician, worship leader and director of music are evident on Sundays and throughout the week. This is a decision that promises great things for the future!"

Ross will work with the pastoral team and a variety of music groups and vision teams to respond to the work of the Music Advisory Team and the strategic opportunities in the coming months and years. Congratulations, Ross!

Ann Herrold-Peterson, Staff-Parish Relations Committee Chair
Rev. Dr. Mark A. Fowler, Lead Pastor

September 2016, *The Chimes*