

Music at Westminster

2023–2024

The music program at Westminster Church continues its ministry of building community and leading the music of worship together. Choir members are actively involved in every aspect of the church's life and steadfastly devoted and committed to our efforts, for which I'm most grateful, and I look forward to the many opportunities for musical growth and sharing in worship the choirs continually afford the congregation. *Everyone* in the Westminster community is invited and encouraged to become involved. The choirs cannot flourish and effectively serve without *you*. As the church receives its life from the diverse gifts of its members, so too does each choir. We are a connectional church and we build up our church's body through the wonderful bonding and interaction that take place in small groups such as choirs. Our program is designed to cultivate the musical contributions to worship of the entire congregation and we have a seat waiting for you!



Sion, Switzerland, the oldest organ still playable

I invite you to read and learn more about each choir and Westminster's musical opportunities and am always pleased to discuss the possibilities of involvement with anyone interested.



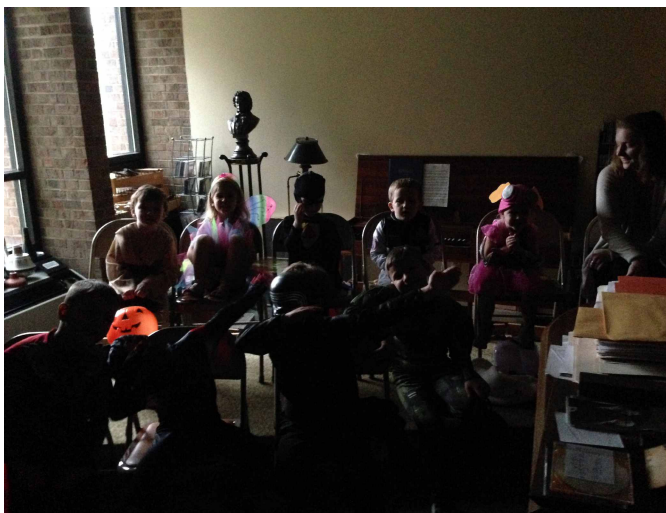
The Choir Schedule

- ❖ Boys' and Girls' Choirs (jointly): Wednesdays, 4:45–5:45 p.m.
- ❖ Brass Choir: Thursdays, 4:30–5:30 p.m.
- ❖ Chancel Choir: Wednesdays, 7:45–9:15 p.m.
- ❖ Four-in-Hand Ringers: Thursdays, 8:00–8:30 p.m.
- ❖ Handbell Choir: Thursdays, 7:00–8:00 p.m.
- ❖ Rainbow Choir: Mondays, 4:30–5:00 p.m., followed by a family dinner
- ❖ Recorder Ensemble: Thursdays, 6:00–7:00 p.m.
- ❖ Trombone Choir: Thursdays, in conjunction with Brass Choir
- ❖ Westminster Choristers: Tuesdays, 6:00–7:00 p.m.
- ❖ Westminster Strings: Determined by each player's schedule
- ❖ Young Musicians' Class: Mondays, 5:15–6:00 p.m., preceded by a family dinner



Early Childhood Music Education

Westminster's commitment to its children is seen very early on in its emphasis on education and inclusion, both in Christian Education and music. A member of Westminster Choristers, who had begun her musical journey in Westminster's pre-school choir and grown up through the various young choirs, shared during her reflection on Senior Sunday that she could never remember a time when she didn't sing. That is deeply meaningful to me and affirming—it is the crux of my passion and my musical calling to help each child discover their voice and inner musician, reveal their innate ability, and promote a deep love and appreciation for all kinds of music. I also believe firmly in the legendary musical educator Shinichi Suzuki's (Suzuki method) philosophy that every child has talent and ability. Creativity is a precious human attribute and singing a most important life skill—activities every person can do and enjoy, though they require nurture and instruction. This is best started at an early age, while the brain is “blooming.”



Halloween Party 2019, during Westminster's extended power outage

Rainbow Choir

- Has provided critical training as an introduction to the joys of music and Westminster's choral program for 40 years
- Geared to children around four years of age through kindergarten
- Provides a good foundation of basic music skills, including music reading and singing
- Activities also include listening to a wide variety of recorded and live music, instrument demonstrations, and our traditional parties, Halloween and J. S. Bach's birthday bash.
- Comfortable and supportive environment with specialized, positive one-on-one interaction



“The Tube” helps each child hear their own voice more acutely. The brain then aligns their aural input with their vocal production, allowing them to match pitch.

Young Musicians' Class

- Generally intended for young musicians in the first and second grades
- Further development of skills established and nurtured in Rainbow Choir
- Critical transitional link to the Boys' and Girls' Choirs
- Focus is on more advanced music theory and ear training

- Nurturing of acute tuning and healthy vocal production
- Singing together in small groups and adjusting to being part of a musical team; also singing music while reading text
- Continued one-on-one work in areas needing additional time

These two groups are the hope and future of sacred music in the church. Participants join centuries of musicians committed to leading the music of worship, following the encouragement of the Psalms. We are delighted to have so many young people involved!

Schola Cantorum

We continue our comprehensive program of musical training for the Boys' and Girls' Choirs. Resources from both the Royal School of Church Music in America and my nearly 40 years of experience have enabled this effort and I'm pleased to offer this to our capable young singers. Besides the many musical benefits, *Schola Cantorum* honors requests from members of the choirs, and it is exciting, challenging, and rewarding. Study includes increased use of solfege ("Do-Re-Mi"), music theory, and elements found in the comprehensive singing curriculum *Voice for Life*.

Girls' Choir

- Comprised of 3rd through 8th graders
- Rehearses jointly with the Boys' Choir
- Frequently sings with instrumental accompaniment, whether at Westminster or with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra
- "Hymn of the Week" segment develops a good knowledge of our hymnody
- Development of sightsinging using solfege
- Major emphasis on singing harmony, an essential skill for any singer!
- Occasional fellowship opportunities to have fun and further build community



A cathedral choir's trebles

Boys' Choir

- Comprised of 3rd through 8th graders with unchanged voices, this is East Tennessee's oldest boychoir.
- Rehearses jointly with the Girls' Choir, sharing the same curriculum and emphases
- Occasional fellowship opportunities to have fun and further build community, such as *Pizza, Pipes* (tour of our sanctuary organ), *and Movie* and laser tag

Westminster Choristers

- Older middle through high school students—the culmination of many years of training in the younger choirs
- Choir tours throughout the eastern United States
- Productions of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Godspell*
- Joint projects with the Chancel Choir and the KSO, including excerpts from Handel's *Messiah*, Mahler's *Symphony No. 8*, Mozart's *Missa brevis in C, K. 220* and *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and Puccini's *Turandot*
- Wide range of musical styles and types of instrumental accompaniment
- Continued efforts with solfege to further develop sightsinging in parts (we have great fun with this in most rehearsals!)
- Several collaborations with the Chancel Choir each year



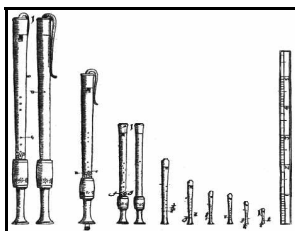
Brass Choir

- Founded in the summer of 1982 and an integral part of worship throughout the year ever since
- Intended for advanced players
- Antiphonal music and works for brass, choir, percussion, and organ
- Music by J. S. Bach, Marcel Dupré, Giovanni Gabrieli, Walter Hartley, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Johann Pezel, Gottfried Reiche, Samuel Scheidt, and Richard Strauss
- Occasional accompaniment of the Chancel Choir
- Appearances in the community as benevolent outreach



Trombone Choir

- Performs a unique part of the brass literature, ranging from transcriptions of madrigals and choral motets to twentieth-century American music
- Music by Bruckner, Beethoven, Speer, Tallis, and Samuel Wesley



Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum* (1629)

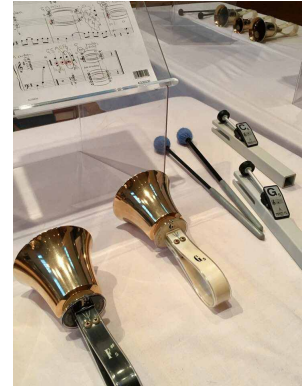
Recorder Ensemble

- Established as an intergenerational group of soprano, alto, tenor, and bass recorder enthusiasts
- Solo, duet, and ensemble repertoire with varied instrumental accompaniment, including harpsichord, and accompaniments for various choirs
- Music by Handel, Palestrina, Michael Praetorius, and Tallis

Handbell Choir

- Founded in November 1981 as an intergenerational group
- Music for our five octave range of bells as well as repertoire including handchimes
- Occasional choral accompaniments, hymn introductions and other service music

Ringling handbells is a lot of fun and the type of musical activity that meets each person at their own level of proficiency. *We are always looking for new ringers.* Membership in this choir is open to anyone, middle school age and older, with the ability to read music.



Four-in-Hand Ringers

Four-in-hand ringing is an advanced technique where the ringer holds two bells (or even a third!) in each hand. Typically, such a group will have four or five ringers, and while our group presently has the required number, it is possible to accommodate an experienced player with an interest.



Westminster Strings

- Beginning as another intergenerational group, founded in 2000, and comprised of serious amateur and professional string players
- Has performed regularly for worship in its early years and more recently mostly for accompanying choral works

Chancel Choir

The Westminster Chancel Choir is an intensely devoted group of hardworking musicians committed to the highest form of music making and to every aspect of the church. We are privileged to meet each week as friends to immerse ourselves in fine sacred choral literature for the purpose of serving the church.

About the choir:

- The primary adult choral ensemble of the church, providing musical leadership throughout the year, mainly at the 11:00 service, and for all festival services
- Advanced literature drawn from centuries of great music
- Major works sung include the Brahms, Duruflé, Fauré, Mozart, Rutter, and Verdi *Requiems*; Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*; Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* and *Hymn to St. Cecilia*; Mozart's *Missa brevis in C*, K. 220 and *Mass in c*, K. 427; and the Vivaldi *Gloria*. Composers of other major works include J. S. Bach, Handel, Schubert, Vaughan Williams, and Whitbourn.
- Production of Gian-Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*



Summer Choir

- Established in 2011 by choral enthusiasts in the Chancel Choir, Westminster Choristers, and the congregation
- Intended to provide choral leadership for worship during the summer months, augmenting the contributions of soloists and small ensembles
- Ideal for a person interested in singing, but without the typical long-term commitment

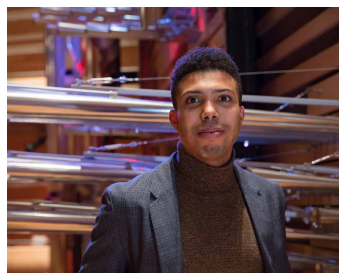
Musica Organi

Westminster Church is very fortunate to have two fine organs: the Richards, Fowkes and Co.'s Opus 7 in the sanctuary and the Lunsford organ in the chapel, and we are pleased to host an annual series of organ recitals, *Musica Organi*, for which we bring the finest organists from around the world to our church, community, and region. Many thanks to our loyal audience and everyone who has ever attended and supported the series over the years!



This season features:

- Kathleen Scheide, concert organist, harpsichordist, composer, and early keyboard specialist, on Friday, October 20, 2023, at 8:00 p.m.



- Concert organist Alcee Chriss III on Friday evening, March 1, at 8:00 p.m. First prize and Bach prize at the Canadian International Organ Competition and the Firmin Swinnen silver medal at the Longwood Gardens International Organ Competition, Dr. Chriss is also a composer, conductor, and jazz pianist. This recital is cosponsored by the Knoxville Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Many thanks always to Jim and Bettie Mason for establishing the *Musica Organi* website and for their ongoing devotion to the series and to Lee Ingram and Michael Richards for their countless contributions of graphic art expertise in producing its printed materials. I am ever indebted to my late aunt, Marjorie Van Eenam Butcher, for her continued underwriting of the series, enabling her and my dream and vision of such an outstanding series to become an ongoing reality at Westminster.

Please visit www.musicaorgani.org to learn more about the series, to view past programs, and to learn more about the Richards, Fowkes organ, including photos, the stoplist and specifications, and commentary.

iListener = Informed Listener

This is a series of informal study/discussion evenings devoted to musical topics ranging from music reading essentials to music to be heard for the first time at Westminster. The intent is to elevate the listener's experience in worship and concerts by sharing interesting insight and background. What we know about the music does influence how we hear it!

The Friends of Music of Westminster Church

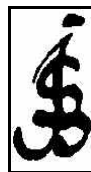
- Established by the Session in 1981 to augment the Worship, Music, and the Arts portion of Westminster's operating budget
- An account funded by unsolicited gifts from members and friends and by freewill offerings at concerts
- The sole source of funding for choir concerts and special musical events

Many thanks to everyone who has helped support Friends of Music and its worthy goals of nurturing fellowship and providing outreach through music!



Thank you for learning about the music program at Westminster Church and for any interest you may have in joining this ministry. Please contact me with any questions at (865) 584-3957, ext. 109 or peter.v.organist@gmail.com.

Peter J. Van Eenam
Organist and Choirmaster



J. S. Bach's self-designed and -drawn monogram from his family Bible.