

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music Notes

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The practice of social distancing to protect our most vulnerable has really served to highlight the singularity of choir as a communal experience. Musicians everywhere are shifting their music lessons to Zoom and other online platforms, performances to online streaming, and using the time at home to compose and practice. However, many in the choral music community — myself included — now find ourselves aimless, unmotivated, and unfulfilled... there is a big hole in our lives. It has never been clearer that choral rehearsals and performances quite literally cannot be done apart from others.

Every culture throughout history has practiced some form of communal singing; this is not true of any other form of musical expression. We sing together to share our joy or grief, we sing together to give each other comfort or strength, we sing together to keep our stories alive from generation to generation. The impulse to sing together is ingrained in us, it is an archaic, powerful instinct that all humans share — in fact, research in cognitive science suggests that singing predates language! Communal singing both brings us together and allows us to practice how to be together, it is a microcosm of society. Online singalongs are a poor substitute for this fundamental element of choir.

As we emerge from this period of social distancing in the coming months, I encourage you to take part in communal singing. While I fully endorse joining a choir, communal singing can be as simple as singing together with friends and family around a campfire, around the house, or in a bar. When it's time for a song in worship, sing loudly and enthusiastically! If you're not accustomed to singing with others, it can be quite awkward at first. However, once you get past this initial self-consciousness, I suspect that you will find that communal singing fills a void in the soul left there after our current period of isolation from each other.

Currently, Unity Church offers the following options for those interested in communal singing:

- **Children's Choir** (grades 1 - 5) Rehearsals are Sundays from 10:15–11:00 a.m., in the Foote Room. Kathleen Radspinner, director. Children's choir rehearsal activities are focused on hands-on music making. In addition to singing the children experience music through movement, games, playing instruments and learning about the elements of music.
- **Unity Choir** (adult, high school and beyond; non-auditioned ensemble of 60 to 75 voices) Rehearsal are Thursdays from 7:30– 9:15 p.m., in the Parish Hall. Unity Choir is a strong component on which our music program is built and is a vital and energetic presence in our community.
- **Unity Singers** (an auditioned a cappella chamber choir) Rehearsals are Tuesdays from 7:30-9:30 p.m., in the Parish Hall.
- **Women's Ensemble** is a continually growing and evolving group. These singers meet for only a half-hour each Sunday morning and into to this short rehearsal time they bring tremendous creative energy, commitment, and joy! Rehearsals are Sundays from 10:15-10:45 a.m.
- **Threshold Choir:** Unity Church houses the Twin Cities chapter of Threshold Choir, an ensemble that sings for those at the thresholds of life. Small groups of threshold singers bring music to people's bedsides as they die or are enduring illness or other suffering.

Unity's Artist in Residence Ina Yukka in Concert

Saturday, April 18
More details to follow!



Music Ministry Online

Unity Church has many recorded music pieces online! Check under the "Worship" tab of the website for past Arthur Foote Music Sunday recordings. There are also a several recordings that can be found here: www.unityunitarian.org/music-collection.html.