

CUUC Choir Annual Report 2016-2017

It has been a wonderful year! I feel so fortunate for the opportunity to come back to CUUC to serve as Music Director again after having to resign for a year to complete my Master's Degree in Counseling. I have been graciously welcomed back with much appreciation and excitement, and for this I am very grateful.

The choir has continued to grow in their overall musicality and singing abilities. I am happy to report that the choir continues to take on the challenges that I present to them with enthusiasm and an open mind. At the beginning of each month, we continue to hold our socials. This gives us a time to spend time with each other outside of the choir rehearsal.

The choir continues to perform at least two Sundays per month. I have been working to motivate the choir members to sing more challenging repertoire, which we begin a few weeks in advance of the worship service at which it will be performed. One of my goals with the choir has been to continue to work on and build their vocal technique, individual musicianship and blend. The choir continues to perform music of varying styles, time periods, languages and cultures. The music for the Sunday services is chosen based on the "theme" of the month.

I am delighted to share that we have had some new additions to the choir this year. The current choir members have been proactive about reaching out to members of the congregation, as well as visitors and inviting them to our Wednesday night rehearsals with the hope of having them join the choir. We have had new additions this year in all voice parts. We feel very fortunate for these new members and the talents that they share with our church. Throughout the year, we have had many of the choir members sing solos in some of the choir anthems, which was well received by the congregation – this was a wonderful way to showcase the talented musicians that we have in our choir.

Sandy Farlow and Deb Bliss are serving as the current Music Librarians. They have spent many hours organizing the library, making copies, filing music and passing out/collecting music at each of the choral rehearsals. I have been trying to be more proactive about choosing repertoire in advance so that they can make copies or pull music in time for our weekly rehearsals. Jeannette Baillie holds the title of Choir Secretary. She has been instrumental in sending out reminder e-mails to the choir via the Church Database regarding rehearsal information, performance attire, performance music and schedules. Elena Westbrook, Dick Hildenbrand, Jeannette Baillie, Patrick Price, & Kathy Smith have been helping me to receive vital information regarding the church, worship and paperwork. I appreciate all of the help that everyone has given me.

The choir is very excited about participating in the annual Pops Concert, which will take place in May. We have some great pieces planned for this event to go along with the theme "Around the World" – each piece of music that will be chosen will have the name of a place within the title. We are hoping to showcase many of choir members who will sing solos at the concert. We are looking for a wonderful evening, which is being staged and managed by Robin Coulonge.

The Choir sang many pieces at the traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight service; I accompanied the Family Christmas Eve Service, and Kathy Smith led the families in the playing of the bells on some of the carols. The choir has performed at the major holidays throughout the year, offering a wide-variety of music to further enhance the services.

On Sundays that I am not at worship services, Nelah McComsey, Elena Westbrook and Amy Dessert are the very talented volunteer pianists who accompany the services. Some of them have played for vocal soloists during the service as special music. I plan to work with other choir members on recruiting more musicians to play on the Sundays when the choir is not present.

As always, I continue to enjoy my time working at Community Unitarian Universalist Church and am thankful for the opportunity to work with such a dedicated and talented group of singers and people. I always leave choir rehearsals and Sunday morning services feelings rejuvenated and refreshed and I know that many of the choir members have expressed a mutual feeling.

Christopher T. Wolff, Jr.