

NRC Music News

Vol. 1, No. 1

*A Publication of the Niskayuna Reformed Church
Music Committee, Niskayuna, New York*

Winter 2019

Young NRC Musicians



Jordan McCann

Welcome to the first edition of NRC Music News, a quarterly publication of the Niskayuna Reformed Church in Niskayuna, New York. We hope you enjoy this view into our music program and are inspired to come join us as we make a joyful noise each Sunday morning at 9:30 am. Here we celebrate our young musicians who learn what it means to sing in a choir starting at the age of 4 in the Cherub Choir and who graduate to the Youth Choir in third grade.

One such musician is Jordan McCann of Niskayuna who says she began singing before she could talk and hasn't stopped since! When asked about her experience singing in the Youth Choir, Jordan says that she looks forward to

rehearsals or performances every week. She enjoys learning new musical repertoire and singing with the Senior Choir for special events the most. Now on the verge of graduating from high school, Jordan says that she will miss singing in church but is excited to see what musical opportunities await her in college where she plans to pursue a bachelor's degree.

Continued on Page 3

Meet the Members

The Senior Choir welcomed two new members this past December in time for the special music service on December 23, 2018, Nancy Ellen Swann and Bill Vincent.



New choir members, Bill Vincent and Nancy Ellen Swann.

Nancy Ellen, a retired Home Economics teacher for the Shenendehowa School

Continued on Page 2

Meet the Members

Continued from page 1

district, sings with the Thursday Musical Club, a women's choir, and has served as their treasurer for the past 9 years. In her spare time, she also quilts and makes counted cross stitch projects for family members. Her husband, a retired GE engineer, does woodworking, makes cabinets for family members and gets to make her quilt racks.

Bill, a Niskayuna resident, says coming to NRC has become a family event, drawing in-laws from as far away as Sacandaga Lake. He has always felt very welcomed by this church community and enjoys both Pastor Jason Fulkerson's sermons and the social time at coffee hour. Newly retired from a 40 year career with Jonathan Reid LTD, Bill has decided that singing in the choir is one of his retirement hobbies. Singing in the choir has even increased his popularity ratings with his grandkids who are proud to see Grandpa on stage in his red robes.

Music and Worship:

Music and Creation

"I play the notes as they are written, but it is God who makes the music." Johann Sebastian Bach

An RCA.org article entitled, "The Theology and Place of Music in Worship," says that *"Music is a gift of God and part of the created order."* The article continues with, *"Human music-making participates in the music of creation and reflects the order, beauty, and diversity of God's creation."* This leads one to think about the notion of creation and music. Isaiah 55:12b says *"the mountains and the hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the*

field will clap their hands." Creation itself is musical and brings glory to its Creator. Oscar Hammerstein said that all of the sounds of the earth are like music, which probably led him to set lyrics to a song about it (*"the hills are alive with the sound of music"*). If we think about that, about music being a gift from God to *all* of His creation, it brings to mind birdsong, ocean waves, wind through the leaves, the howling of wolves. What a marvelous symphony!

The regular rhythm of heartbeat, the reliability of ocean tides, the patterns of the earthly winds reflect the order of nature. In a world of chaos and confusion, a world of noise and endless distraction, music serves as a powerful force to calm the body and focus the mind. This is one of the Lord's greatest gifts to us. And in response, truly the world's greatest music has been written to glorify God in gratitude and praise.

"Sing to the Lord, all the earth; tell of his salvation day after day." 1 Chronicles 16:23

Here are some popular music and nature songs. Can you add to the list?

Joy to the World, Handel; All Creatures Great and Small, Alexander/Wasson; This is My Father's World, Babcock; The Revelation Song, Jennie Lee Riddle; All Creatures of Our God and King, Hymn #100

Music Appreciation 101:

The SATB Choir: What's That?

Our Senior Choir has the traditional four part set up developed in the first half of the 17th century, during the Renaissance period of music history. This is when the terminology soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, or SATB choir, first gained the meaning it has today.

Continued on Page 4

Performance Review

25 NRC Senior Choir members, 9 NRC Youth Choir members, 5 brass instrumentalists, 4 members of the NRC Eendracht Bell Choir and 1 organist performed an arrangement of "Christmas Day", a compilation of four favorite Christmas hymns for SATB choir by Gustav Holst for the special



Christmas service on Sunday, December 23, 2018. Director of Music Ministry, Andrew Burger, invited the instrumentalists through contacts he has at area music education programs and welcomed guest singers from as far away as Charlottesville, Virginia. It is regular practice for Andrew to recruit guests and to bring together the various musical groups within the community to bring quality special event performances into the acoustic hall of the NRC sanctuary. Also performed at the December 23rd service were several instrumental pieces arranged for brass quintet and the hymn "Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light" for SATB choir and members of the Eendracht Bell choir. Beyond such special events, all NRC music groups within the church have an active schedule of performances aimed at elevating the joy of worship through music. Each group actively recruits more participants, some requiring little to no music experience. Perhaps you would like to join a group now to help prepare for the next big music event this Spring. If you are

interested in learning how you can be a part of the music ministry, please contact the church at 518-785-5575.

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Continued from Page 1

Jordan's future plans include singing for her final semester in the Capital District Youth Chorale and performing as Marmee in the upcoming

production of *Little Women* at Niskayuna High School from February 28 through March 2nd. When asked how she will continue to make music after graduation, Jordan says that she will keep taking voice lessons and join as many choirs as she can!

Articles for this newsletter were submitted and/or edited by Joyce Anderson, Andrew Burger, Sue Lichtig and Jennifer Politano.



NRC Musicians, Rebecca Benjamin, Allan Holmes and Jennifer Politano were spotted in UAlbany Pep Band.

Events Calendar

Here is a list of musical events put on by the Niskayuna Reformed Church. Contact the church office or committee chair for more information.

NRC Music Group	Performance Date
Eendracht Bell Choir	March 17 and April 28, 2019
Cherub Choir	tbd
Junior Choir	February 10, 2019
Senior Choir	Weekly unless noted

Music Appreciation

Continued from Page 4

Soprano, from the Italian word *sopra* meaning above, is the highest voice, and often carries the melody. Alto, in Italian meaning high, is the next highest voice part, and is usually a harmony or counter melody to the sopranos. Tenor voices from the Italian *tenore* "to hold" used to hold the melody while the other voices carried more complicated harmonies above them. In modern choruses they are the higher of the two male voice parts. The lower of the male voice parts, bass from Italian *basso* is usually responsible for singing the basis of key and chord function.

What part a person sings is determined by their natural range, how low or high they can sing comfortably. That being said, a great trick for determining what part you sing best is to listen for the various parts in the hymns of our regular worship service and try singing along. For example, try singing the alto part on the

second verse of a hymn after singing the melody during the first verse. You may find the organ plays the various parts simultaneously, making it easier to pick out the tune.

The scope of the SATB choir is broad, and from the highest notes of the sopranos to the lowest notes of the basses, the human voice is a powerful musical instrument. As we listen to each voice join the choir in song, we hear the strength of our musical offering to God grow.

Who's Who and What's Up

Here is a list of musical groups that church members recommend or are members of in the capital region and beyond.

Community Musical Group	Upcoming Event
Colonie Town Band	tbd
Music Company Orchestra	3/30/19 Cabaret Dinner and Show at the Saratoga Holiday Inn
Northern Berkshire Chorale	3/15/19 Williams College
Octavo Singers	5/18/19 "Peace Pieces" 7:30pm St. John the Evangelist Church
Schenectady Symphony Orchestra	3/24/19 GE Theater at Proctor's 3:00 pm
Thursday Musical Club: Women's Choir	4/27/19 3:00 pm Concert at Eastern Parkway Methodist Church