

To my friends at Nassau Church,

With bittersweet emotions, I want to announce my departure as organist from Nassau Presbyterian Church. I have accepted a new position at Saint James Roman Catholic Church in Basking Ridge, NJ. I will be their new director of music, as well as the music teacher for their Pre-K through 8th grade school! I am filled with hope and exciting prospects as I prepare to start this new chapter of my career. It has always been a dream of mine to become a director of music one day, and now I can finally begin to see that dream being fulfilled with this opportunity.

As overjoyed and excited as I am to be undertaking a new position with different responsibilities, it gives me a great deal of grief to be saying farewell to this place that I call a second home. Even in my thoughts as I am writing this, the word “bittersweet” understates my true feelings. The relationships and memories that I have made here with friends and colleagues are and will be cherished dearly in my heart. I have had so much uplifting joy and spiritual fulfillment playing for the choir, congregation, and staff here at Nassau Church. The character of a purely loving and community-driven ministry here in this place is unlike any other, and I hope to echo these values and knit them deeply into the new music ministry I will be creating at Saint James.

The position I have held here at Nassau was designed as a “student” position – one that would provide challenges which align with the education I received at Westminster Choir College. This position was so much more than that for me. I not only grew exceedingly as a student organist and well-rounded musician, but as a human being as well. Often in life, you will hear people say, “I can always aim higher” or “the grass could always be greener”. But here, during worship (in person AND livestream), during rehearsal, special concerts, or during Sunday night youth fellowship, the one repeated thought that floated across in my head was: “I am right where I need to be.” I am beyond grateful to have spent the last four years making music here, but even more grateful to have worked with the most compassionate staff, a wonderful and understanding choir, and a caringly attentive congregation.

Sincerely and gratefully yours,

Michael Ryan