



October 1, 2025

Naples United Church of Christ Family,

What words or phrases would you use to describe our music on Sunday mornings? Awesome. Inspiring. Comforting. Heavenly. Sweet. Powerful. These are just a few words I would use to describe the music at our church. In fact, there are many Sundays in our worship service when the music is so good, it's "beyond words." Simply put, our music at Naples UCC is incredibly special.

Over the years, our church has invested in the people who help bring this special music to us—masterful instrumentalists, dynamic vocalists, and, yes, young people. Sunday after Sunday, students and young musicians who are still in school or beginning careers in teaching, theater, music instruction, band, and music therapy find a home at our church. The energy that these young people bring is palpable. Indeed, the intergenerational dynamic flowing between the choir and our congregation in the pew makes for such a meaningful spiritual experience. Year after year, these young musicians benefit from our Music Gift Fund. They love being with us, and they love sharing their gifts of music with us in such a way that helps, blesses, and serves.

In working with our Music Director Dr. Becky Weese Rumpf, I have learned about how passionate she is in her desire to develop future musicians. In her 25 years of service with us, Dr. Becky has mentored, taught, and guided hundreds of young musicians who are now using their gifts of music in churches, schools, and theaters all over the world. The opportunities they've had at Naples UCC have proven to be critical in shaping their vocational journeys.

This year, as part of our annual "Music Gift Fund Sunday" (October 26<sup>th</sup> at 9AM and 11AM), the theme of my message will be "The Call of the Young Musician." Just as God called young David to use his spiritual gifts to bless an older generation (1 Samuel 16: 14-23), so too is God still at work in calling young people to share their gifts of music in ways that convey God's love to all of us. What a joy it is to be able to support them!

As we consider our gifts to the Music Gift Fund this year, may we be reminded that we are investing in more than just excellent music, we are investing, too, in the lives and dreams of aspiring young musicians. I hope you will join me and my family in generously supporting the Music Gift Fund this year at Naples UCC.

With Gratitude,

Pastor Mark

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