

## **PASTOR NOTE:** from the Rev. David Pattee

### **Why Mess with Music?!**

Leaders of Peace United Church are proposing a new way of organizing our resources in support of worship, moving from two separate music programs to one integrated music ministry. Building from a long history of excellence in music, the vision is to have creative and coherent leadership coordinating various ensembles and soloists, drawing from diverse styles – jazz, classical and others -- with a minister of music who:

- Collaborates with clergy and other contributors in developing Spirit-filled worship services;
- Plays a keyboard instrument (piano/organ) to lead congregational singing and accompany ensembles and soloists;
- Invites and cultivates diversity and encourages youth participation;
- Directs choral program(s);
- Encourages musically inclined church members and friends to contribute to worship services;
- Cultivates relationship with the rich community of artistic talent in the Santa Cruz area, inviting guest performers and conductors as warranted by occasion and allowed by budget;
- Organizes the church's budget for music ministries and supervises the maintenance of the church's musical instruments;
- Provides or otherwise secures the musical talent needed for occasional services of the church, including weddings and funerals.

### **But we already have terrific music at PUCC! Why should we change?**

Often the need for change is presented in terms of money. The approved budget for FY2018-19 (our last year before Covid-19 hit in the Spring of 2020) was \$532,922, projecting a deficit of \$9,769, with \$66,400 in compensation to music leaders. That level of compensation, \$66,400, continued through FY19-20 and FY20-21. With a proposed budget of \$510,307 for FY 2021-22, projecting a deficit of \$87,323, leaders have judged that our music programs cost more than the church can sustain and must be reorganized, but this judgment also reflects a cluster of interests and concerns that move us to make changes.

- The management of two separate music programs is out of scale for our church. It started when we had two worship services with more attendance, and a larger membership and staff. Now it's a juggle of alternating schedules, styles, and expectations supported by the smaller budget of a smaller church with a smaller staff and a single pastor. We don't need a crew of specialists. We need musical leadership to be part of a team of utility infielders playing together to revitalize our church.
- An unhelpful partisanship has developed with regard to our dual music programs. There are people who will only attend Sabbath worship when their preferred musical ensemble is performing. There are some who will say plainly that their continuing involvement with the church is contingent upon one or another musical program, performer, or leader. The church's aim is to build up a creative, diverse and inclusive community of faith driven by mission and not captive to factionalism.
- We have two separate music programs that do not collaborate with each other. Each coordinates with the pastor separately, and planning is focused almost entirely on

making sure there's music from week to week, with little time or energy for longer-range vision, developmental goals, and working with other ministries of the church. It's difficult to imagine a strategy for growth under these circumstances. No one is at fault in this, certainly not the program leaders who are principally employed elsewhere, generous with their availability, and paid only for very limited part-time roles with us. It simply reflects the truth that our resources are spread too thin. We have been scrambling to keep up when we need to be concentrating on how to move ahead.

Admittedly, change involves risk. Worship is the first ministry of the church and music is, arguably, its most vital element. We're trying to do a new thing for the church where there are personal loyalties and emotional investments. We will make mistakes, and we'll have to figure it out as we go, learning and adapting along the way. There will be some who don't understand, others who don't accept or who just disagree. But the interests and concerns at work in this change have been discussed for years, and the proposal of an integrated music ministry does fit with this time of reinvention and rebuilding.

May all our efforts be to advance the mission of the church and for the glory of God.