

OLD NORTH CHURCH
Music Patrons Fund
8 Stacey Street, Marblehead, MA 01945

May 2022

Dear Friends,

The annual collection for our **Music Patrons Fund** will take place at the 10am service on Sunday, May 22, 2022 – known as *Music Sunday*, and more recently *Jazz Sunday*. I hope you will make every effort to attend this very special service! What a long-awaited pleasure it is to announce that we will experience this cherished musical occasion *together* – live and in-person!

The musical components of our upcoming *Music Sunday* will again explore the connection between sacred jazz and spirituality; given your enthusiastic feedback following past Jazz Sundays, May 22 will mark our fifth annual *Jazz Sunday*! On behalf of the Senior Choir, Soloists, and invited guest artists, we are delighted by the opportunity to share our unique interpretation of some of our favorite gospel tunes and hymns with the entire congregation – as we endeavor to celebrate a global message of peace, harmony, and hope. We're counting on *your voice too*, as part of our Congregational Choir! Instrumental music will be provided by an extraordinary trio, including Dave Clark, *bass*; Doug Olsen, *trumpet*; and Mark Shilansky, widely celebrated jazz *pianist* and frequent Old North guest artist. Please arrive early to enjoy prelude music performed by this esteemed jazz trio.

As the conclusion of my thirty-third year as *Minister of Music* at Old North Church draws near, I find my professional reflections are a mixture of sadness and optimism. Sadness, as we bid farewell to Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun after 15 years of extraordinary and devoted ministry, which included his strong encouragement of our ambitious music program. I shall miss Dennis's profound love of all kinds of music, as well as his beautiful tenor voice in our Festival Chorus! Optimism, as we begin to emerge from the devastating grip of Covid-19, learning new methods of interacting, communicating, and coping with a pandemic that has clearly forced a seismic life adjustment for all. Optimism as well, that our search for a permanent Senior Minister will expand our horizons and attitudes in new and important ways.

The last 27 months – since March of 2020 – have been destabilizing on so many levels, compounded by a severe shoulder and wrist injury of my dominant arm from which I am still recovering (not ideal for a keyboard player and conductor)! But through all, I have been so comforted by the entire Old North Church community. I am exceedingly grateful to my colleague ministers and staff members, our professional musicians, lay ministry, countless volunteers, and so many remarkable friends. *Thank you* for providing an environment which encourages and nourishes music as an indispensable ministry.

The last 27 months have also motivated many new approaches and methodologies – innovative ways of connecting with one another and an expanded use of virtual resources. Perhaps these many months of seclusion also provided a long-needed chance to stop, listen, exercise patience and understanding, and re-boot. We have been forced to pivot to new ways of acting and interacting, we have learned to be resilient, we have learned the importance of “back-up” plans, and we have learned to take much less for granted. Why is any of this applicable to our Music Program at Old North Church and the importance of your support of this program through the **Music Patrons Fund**?

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For those of us planning, preparing, and executing the music program at Old North, our resilience has led us to our “new normal” which includes: wearing masks while singing; social distancing; being well-stocked of Covid testing kits and adhering to rigorous testing protocols; substitute planning for Sunday services, holidays, and concerts in the event singers or soloists become unwell; hiring guest artists to maintain a stimulating program especially in the months before we were safely able to gather as a Senior Choir; learning how to accomplish both an in-person and a high-quality live-streamed music program; and more! Our “new normal” presents new and unexpected expenses which we rely on our overall church budget to support, and in part, the **Music Patrons Fund**. And while our new normal is challenging to be sure, I am so proud of the profound respect and concern for one another I’ve observed. The desire to responsibly sing, ring, listen, learn, and make music together – live or recorded – is alive and well here at Old North!

Recall, our general church budget supports essential core elements of the music program at Old North, and by fulfilling your pledge this year, you are supporting the infrastructure for our musical staff. It is the “special” elements of the music program which are supported by the **Music Patrons Fund**. Such endeavors this past year included the memorable singing of Sea Shanties together, acclaimed pianist Jacqueline Schwab’s solo concert and audience sing-along, the extraordinary brass quartet and timpani enhancing Easter Sunday, the guest oboist and organist for Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun’s final service, the string quartet and organist accompanying Fauré’s *Requiem* during Holy Week, and the jazz trio hired to enhance our upcoming Music Sunday, to name a few. So many musicians integral to our Old North music program and beyond, are still endangered. Thanks in part to the **Music Patrons Fund**, I am proud that we have offered a consistent platform for sharing their talents with our church community.

If you are in a position to contribute to our **Music Patrons Fund** at this time, your gift will not only help fund numerous programs which minister to the entire community and preserve our vibrant musical life at Old North, but you will be providing sustenance to so many imperiled artists. For all of this impact and more, I believe this is a unique and important appeal, and I hope you agree.

Kindly make your check payable **Old North Church**, noting “**Music Patrons Fund**” in the memo line, and mail to:

Music Committee
Old North Church
8 Stacey Street, Marblehead, MA 01945

On behalf our hard-working Music Ministry Board – Ruth Ann Wallace and Dee Burgett, *Co-Chairs*, Pattye Comfort, Nicole Eicker, Kevin Hayden, Rebecca Robison, Andrew Rodger, Sara Del Dotto, *Director, Youth Music Program*, and Liz Smith, *Director, Bell Choir* – **thank you**, from my heart, for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Maria van Kalken
Minister of Music

PS: For those unwilling or unable to attend our May 22 Music Patrons-funded *Jazz Sunday*, this service will be live-streamed and available on the Old North Church YouTube Channel in perpetuity.