

August 1, 2020
Sarasota-Manatee AGO Chapter
Member News



Dear Members and Friends,

As we continue our long journey in social isolation, your leaders want you to know that we recognize the importance of reaching out to you with virtual events as soon as possible. Please see the results of your Program Committee's latest zoom meeting held on July 28th, and the ways in which we hope to communicate and enjoy fellowship together going forward in the next month.

Join Us for our First Chapter Event

Officer Installation via Zoom and Open Discussion

Monday, September 21, 7:00 pm

Registration to Come

In the interest of safety for all our Chapter's members, the Program Committee has planned a virtual installation with a brief message from our chaplain, Father Wilson. Bring your own snacks and drinks to enjoy a "banquet" from the comfort of home.

Not only will you be able to see familiar faces that you have missed, but there will also be a time of discussion for you to make your voice heard about what kinds of conversations you'd like to have via ZOOM as the chapter stays connected virtually over the coming months.

Maybe you would like to share resources, talk about pandemic worship planning, or just chat with your colleagues in a virtual happy hour.

Join the conversation about tentative dates and topics at our virtual installation banquet on September 21.

If you have any trouble with ZOOM, don't hesitate to contact one of the Chapter officers for tech assistance.

Depending on the state of the pandemic, we are considering a number of ideas for 2020. These include a visit to the new Venice carillon, a handbell workshop with John Behnke, and a visit with a scholar in the Royal School of Church Music.

Sub-dean, Amy

Unique Virtual Choir Experience

We hope you enjoy the virtual choir experience that our Cynthia Roberts-Greene had recently while preparing for Eric Whitacre's Virtual Choir 6 recording of "Sing Softly". The first link contains the CBS interview with the composer and the second is the three plus minute anthem followed by six minutes of credits listing all 17,562 singers in 129 countries who participated in the project. The paragraphs that follow are Cynthia's personal notes about her experience with the project.



CBS Sunday Morning: Eric Whitacre's Virtual Choir 6: Sing Gently
<https://youtu.be/uS0ioMnVdHw>



Followed by Eric Whitacre's Virtual Choir 6: Sing Gently
<https://youtu.be/InULYfJHKIO>

Virtual Choir 6 (Sing Gently by Eric Whitacre) was announced shortly after the beginning of the pandemic, around the middle to late March. There was no audition. After signing up officially, I downloaded the sheet music and learned the music with the demo video that Eric Whitacre's team provided with only four voices total singing the four parts. There were several rehearsals with him at the piano in real time with the entire group, as well as sectional rehearsals occurring around 11:00 pm at night, because Eric is in California. It helped to know there were many others involved in the rehearsals simultaneously. One could also opt to view the recorded rehearsals afterwards.

I almost decided not to participate because of the volume of singers that he had announced were involved. I persisted, because it was important to me as a choral director and singer to be in a choir that connected me with singing and choral music when we were not able to sing or direct choirs in real life.

With my husband's help, I recorded my video (soprano), singing to a piano track (with earbuds) while viewing Eric Whitacre conducting. Hearing and seeing myself afterwards was pretty stark. One voice, no accompaniment. Once we were finished with the video, which took several tries and a few days to make sure it was good enough, we sent it in and that was that, until today when we heard it for the first time. It was magical how the technical teams he had working for him assimilated all of the videos—17,572 from 129 countries across the globe-- made them blend together, and "Sing as one."

Cynthia

P. S. Did you listen to the end of the interview where Whitacre comments on virtual choirs versus in-person choirs? Nancy



*Informed by the Past, Committed to the Present,
Preparing for the Future*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Until the Vaccine Arrives – Leading Worship in the time of COVID-19

DALLAS, TEXAS (July 27, 2020) – Gathering and singing together have become sources of deep concern for churches throughout the nation. As headlines about the pandemic dominate the news, choir directors, church musicians and clergy seek direction and information for creating impactful worship. This need inspired “**Until the Vaccine Arrives**” a live, online workshop for worship leaders from the Church Music Institute (CMI), August 7-8, 2020. Registration is available at: <https://www.churchmusicinstitute.org/>

During the Zoom sessions, attendees will interact with, among others, Dr. David Arcus and Dr. Don Horisberger, the 2020 Paul Lindsley Thomas and Hal Hopson Lecturers. These master musicians have excelled in performance themselves (David Arcus as Duke University’s Chapel Organist and Don Horisberger as Associate Conductor of the Chicago Symphony Chorus) and worked with lay musicians in churches to provide congregations with meaningful musical vehicles for worship.

The workshop will also include an online screening of the documentary *Sacred Sound* followed by a discussion with film creator, Rev. Robin Arcus, and a session on using copyrighted material when creating online worship by Rev. Timothy Binkley.

“Attendees will gain insights through frank and honest conversations about church music as vocation and as a means for spiritual growth,” said Dr. Arcus who is leading a session called “Composing Organ Music Using Public Domain Hymn Tunes.” The sessions will facilitate suggestions not just from Dr. Arcus, but from all participants about how they see their vocation in the time of a global crisis, gathering ideas for how to deepen their vocational commitment during this time. “Physical distancing does not have to mean a loss of connection with our colleagues or our congregations. Nor does the loss of in-person worship have to lead to a lowering of our need for great sacred music to be a part of our lives and the worship life of our congregations.”

Dr. Horisberger will examine public domain and other music appropriate for streaming with tips for conductors to maximize musical and textual beauty. “At least two of the sessions will highlight choral music. In one, we will talk about planning and resources for a Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent, presenting materials that will help choir directors interested in developing such a service for their congregation,” explains Dr. Horisberger. “In another, we will present six anthems suitable for virtual choirs, smaller choirs, or choirs with limited rehearsal time, commenting also on ways in which directors can make these more meaningful in these uncertain times.”

The “Navigating the New Normal” panel discussion, led by Drs. Horisberger and Arcus, will include practicing worship leaders discussing how they provide meaningful worship for their congregants, including feedback from congregants, followed by attendee discussion.

The workshop will kick-off on Friday with Zoomed screening of "Sacred Sound." The documentary follows 50 girl choristers, learning 16 pieces of music during one week of preparation. It examines the teamwork required to make superb choral music and the capacity of music for spiritual formation. “The insights from the film that apply, especially during quarantine, are that music matters, to adults and children,” said Rev. Arcus. “Music is formative, building community, faith and coping mechanisms.” Rev. Arcus added that the film illuminates the critical need for connections, whether through, “Zoom, Whatsapp, curriculum, competitions or encouragement.”

The final session was developed to cover a new concern for church musicians, using copyrighted material online. Timothy Binkley will lead a session that will broaden attendees’ understanding of how copyright law both protects and restricts church musicians. “We’ll explore what has and what has not changed about copyright with the advent of COVID-19,” said Mr. Binkley, “And explore the complex world of copyright licenses.”

The cost of the workshop is \$25.00 for CMI members, including those with joint AGO/CMI membership. AGO members can learn how to activate that membership when they login to <https://www.agohq.org/>.

Register for the workshop at:

<https://www.churchmusicinstitute.org/events-and-workshops/>