

# Soli Deo Gloria

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MUSIC MINISTRY AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## New Psalmody Choir Pitch Perfect

The Children's and Youth Music Ministry is thriving this year at FPC. We've even added a new choir, Psalmody, that specializes in service singing. Psalmody members, middle and high school-aged singers, meet once a month at 7:50 A.M., sing the choral introit for the 8:30 A.M. service and then meet upstairs in the Cheek House from 8:30-9:30 A.M. for doughnuts, fellowship and rehearsal, finishing in time to attend Sunday School.

Psalmody's membership is small with only ten members, but enthusiastic and musically literate. All Psalmody members read music well; several have perfect pitch — and they all have a sense of humor. Psalmody's fall anthem selections have included compositions by Franz Schubert and Geoffrey Burgon, as well as an anthem from a *Southern Harmony* source.

At the invitation of Sandra Randleman, Doxology and Psalmody joined forces for an afternoon of service on November 4 at Blakeford Manor. Instrumentalists (playing violin, harp and piano) from both choirs presented a 3:15 P.M. recital in the living room. The choristers then sang hymns and anthems for the 4:00 P.M. Vesper communion service.

The next focus for both choirs, as well as our choirs of younger children, is the preparation of music for Advent and Christmas.



Psalmody will sing for both services on December 2; Doxology will sing for both services on December 9; Hosanna II, taught by Lara Woodward, will sing for both services on

December 16. All

our children's choirs, including the Cherub singers (taught by Kelly Posey) and Hosanna I (taught by Carolyn Naumann), will sing for the 5:00 P.M. Christmas Eve service.



## Sanctuary Chorale: Fine Music, Friendship *by Keith Moore*

Greetings to all who sing in the Sanctuary Chorale or hear their contributions to the 8:30 A.M. service each week. This small ensemble (usually 15-20) meets at 6:15 P.M. on Wednesday nights in the choir room and gathers in the balcony of the sanctuary Sunday mornings at 7:50 A.M. to prepare for worship. Although we invite musicians with varying levels of skill to participate, our members all want to give their best each Sunday. To that end, we practice our anthems weeks in advance of each service.

There are many things that I love about this ensemble. One is that we rehearse in a semi-circle in order to hear each other well and communicate intimately. Another is that there will inevitably be laughter during rehearsal because of the recognition of inaccurate pitches, rhythmic mishaps or tonal inelegance. It is not a setting in which it is easy to hide, but one in which there is great acceptance and empathy. We have good opportunities to know each other through our work and fellowship. Best of all, each member realizes we rely upon

## WINTER MUSIC SCHEDULE

December 9, 4:00 P.M.  
Christmas Concert

January 13, 12:20 P.M.  
Young Artist Concert

February 3, 2:00 P.M.  
Mendelssohn's *Elijah*

February 24, 12:20 P.M.  
Opera Arias for  
Tenor and Baritone

March 1, 6:15 P.M.  
Broadway Dinner Show

March 17, 2:00 P.M.  
Music City Baroque

March 29, 7:00 P.M.  
*Tenebrae...A Service  
of Darkness*

each other greatly in order to produce music worthy to be offered in worship.

It is a marvelous time of year for us as we contemplate Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas and the beginning of a new year. This year we have already enjoyed singing an arrangement of a Scottish hymn at the Kirkin' of the Tartan, performing an anthem with Carol McClure's superb young harpists, receiving a generous gift by Gray Thornburg for the purchase of several new anthems and the unveiling of an anthem by Nashville composer, John Arnn. It is a great privilege to direct this special ensemble for the glory of God.

## Sanctuary Chorale Meets the Composer

by Rhonda Swanson

Chorale members were honored by John Arnn's attendance in worship on September 23, as they presented his anthem *Loving Shepherd of Thy Sheep*. He was a faculty member of Belmont University's School of Music from 1981 until his retirement in 2007, and continues an active career as a composer, arranger and performer in Nashville. The anthem was a gift from Gray and Charley Thornburg.



John shared that he wrote the anthem while he was on sabbatical in 2004, studying with British composer Bob Chilcott and found the text in the old English Hymnal. John says that the best method is to "find a great text and stay out of the way!" The 19th century text was written by Jane Eliza Leeson:

Loving Shepherd of thy sheep, keep thy lambs in safety keep;  
Nothing can thy power withstand, none can pluck them from thy hand.  
May they praise thee every day, gladly all thy will obey;  
like thy blessed ones above, happy in thy precious love.  
Loving Shepherd teach thy lambs to hear;  
suffer not their steps to stray from the straight and narrow way;  
where thou leadest may they go, walking in thy steps below.  
Then, before thy Father's throne, Savior, claim them for thine own.

## Concert Series Features Accomplished Organist

Carolyn Craig, a sixteen-year-old keyboard artist from Knoxville, Tennessee, will perform an organ recital on Sunday, January 13, as part of the 12:20 Concert Series. As a pianist, Carolyn has won several notable competitions, which in turn have led to concerto performances with orchestras in Tennessee, as well as an appearance at Carnegie Hall. As an organist, Carolyn was the first place winner of the Columbia, South Carolina, American Guild of Organists Young Organist Competition in 2012. Currently a student of John Brock, she has also studied organ with Janette Fishell and Ken Cowan. Mark your calendars — this recital is not to be missed!



## In the Loft



Early this October, I spoke with John Wagster about his involvement with the music program at First Presbyterian. John is one of the church's elders, and he has sung with the Sanctuary Chorale for a number of years. His

words about music were thoughtful and insightful, and I hope you'll enjoy reading them.

**NB: How long have you been singing?**

**JW:** I've been singing as long as I can remember — first in school plays and Christmas pageants, and then in choirs in middle school, high school and college.

**NB: What brought you to singing and who has influenced you?**

**JW:** The most important influence has been my family, most of whom are musically inclined. Another important mentor was Gerald Arthur, a high school chorus teacher and the former head of Nashville's Pro Musica. He taught me to appreciate the value of a men's choir.

**NB: Could you name some favorite anthems and hymns?**

**JW:** It's tough to pick one, but my favorite genre is the spiritual. They have an uplifting combination of lyrics, harmony and rhythms that are spiritually moving to me. If I had to pick one major work, it would be Handel's *Messiah*.

**NB: What is your most memorable experience of singing in a choir at First Presbyterian?**

**JW:** Odd as this may seem, it's probably when we get together once or twice a year and we sing the prayer before choir dinners.

**NB: How does singing relate to your spiritual life?**

**JW:** They are inextricably intertwined. No matter what's going on in my life, a compelling harmony can instantly take me to a spiritual place. The power of music is transformative and it speaks to the very essence of our lives — and that includes our spiritual lives.

— Nick Bergin