

The Messenger

Music for Christmas 2025

Rector's Reflections

Dear Friends, In our science-oriented world, the arts – painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, theatre, film, and music – are often relegated to the margins. In our education system, they are nice-to-haves, but certainly don't merit the same funding or emphasis as science, technology, engineering and math ("STEM" for short). The left brain rules!

I have no quibble with the contribution or importance of the sciences. (My first degree was a science degree in nursing – which included everything from biochemistry to pharmacology). But I do still believe that the arts are what humanize us, what provide moral guardrails on science, what impel us to ask "why" (not just "how"), and what teach us to revel in beauty (the beauty of a perfectly tuned jazz chord, every bit as much as the beauty of a molecule).

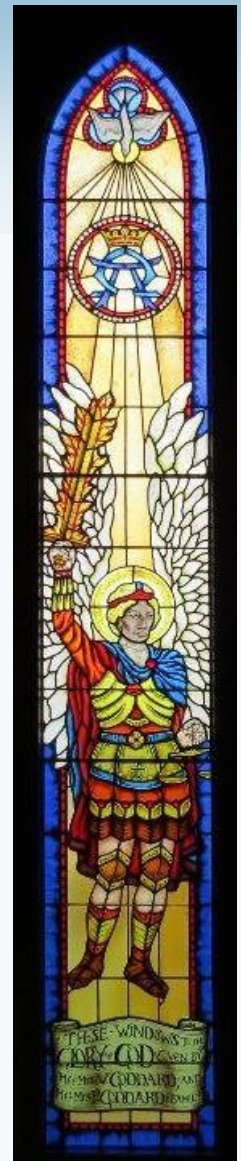
Which brings me to *music*, the topic of this *Messenger* – and most particularly (because this the only art I really know very much about), the art of song.

Scripture refers frequently to music: Miriam sings and dances as the Israelites cross over the Red Sea; David plucks away at his lyre to soothe the troubled spirit of King Saul. Long before the organ was the "king of instruments," the bible showed us trumpets announcing the new moon, tambourines calling us to the dance, and pipes and strings praising the Lord. But above all, there was song.

Most obvious, of course, were the Psalms of David – that collection of 150 Hebrew hymns, which are the foundation of all Judaeo-Christian worship to this day. But there are also countless songs embedded elsewhere in the Bible – short poems which scholars believe first served either as hymns of praise, or as statements of belief meant to teach the faithful. Three of the best loved of these are closely associated with Christmas. One is mute old Zechariah's "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel," which are the first words

(Continued on page 2)

Out of the silence, Music
Out of the darkness, Light
Out of uncertainty, Promise,
Hope was born that night.



Rector's Reflections (continued)

that tumble out of his mouth after he confirms that his newborn son will indeed be called "John." Another is Mary's song of praise, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," uttered in response to the message of the angel Gabriel. And finally, are the words of surrender offered by pious old Simeon in the temple, who is permitted before he dies to set eyes upon the infant saviour: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." These are songs which have been in uninterrupted use for 20 centuries.

For many years, in the Christian liturgical tradition the song was the thing. In fact, the use of instruments came to be strictly forbidden, because song alone allowed for the use of words, and words alone empowered the singer to proclaim the Christian message. In other words, there was an evangelical imperative at play. Even within living memory, the use in church of any instrument unaccompanied by the human voice (such as guitars, drums, strings, piano and yes, even organ) have been frowned upon. Personally, I believe this position did a disservice to the power of instrumental music to give voice to those deep, tender, or even unmentionable movements of the soul which cannot – or dare not – express themselves verbally.

What the kids are hoping for...



Submitted by Jack Barnes

Music can bring us to tears when mere words cannot. Music can be a balm when words are cheap. Music has more respect for silence than words – and sometimes, silence is the only time God can get our attention. Indeed, music imposes what is sometimes much-needed discipline upon our words.

All of which is to say, God has blessed us with both instrument and voice, with music and words, with singers and songs. Both are servants of our worship, and each has its rightful and proper place.

Submitted by
The Very Reverend Ansley Tucker

A Song of Gratitude

Grace flows through each chord you play,
A melody that lights our way.
Your talents blessed by heaven above,
Turn music into sacred love.
Thank you for your faithful tune,
That lifts our hearts and makes us swoon.
May blessings fall like gentle rain,
Upon your life, free from pain.

Wardens' Window

As we close another year together as a parish and community, we find ourselves reflecting on all we've experienced. This past year has been full for our congregation, with skilled interim priests guiding us as we continue searching for a new incumbent. Our services took several engaging directions, featuring Bishop Logan, Paul Schumacher, Peter Parker, Eric Partridge, Jenny Replogle, Doug and Jeannine Friesen and Bill Tartar - all of whom brought creativity, energy, puppets, and music to our worship. We finish 2025 under the loving stewardship of Ansley Tucker and are grateful that she has committed to stay with us through the Easter season.

Our fellowship events remained popular, drawing people together for lively conversation, delicious meals, and music. Activities like Sunday Coffee hour, Pancake Supper, Maundy Thursday Soup and Ice Cream Sunday were enjoyed by many - and by our appetites! Seasonal fairs, the Bottle Divers, and the Purdy Christmas sweet tooth all contributed to supporting our outreach work. We would like to thank all of those who contributed generously to the Christmas Help Program that is so essential to our annual outreach to those in need. Our sincere thanks go out to the Women's Fellowship, Terry, Marguritte, Geri, Deb, Giles, Peter, Lenore and everyone who volunteered their time and energy to make all these events possible.

While our church building is showing its age, we're moving forward with our repair plan for summer 2026. We appreciate everyone who has already contributed to this effort, and look forward to a successful renovation by the end of next summer. The office makeover was a fantastic self-help effort - thank you to Lanny Hubbard, Brian Goddard, Colin Murray, and Ricky Love for getting it done quickly. The brighter and improved workspace is a welcome change for our dedicated Administrator, Sara Baker.

Our search for a new incumbent continues, and we are grateful to the other members of the Selection Committee - Lanny Hubbard, Margaret Eagle, Nancy Paxton and Brian Goddard - for their dedication in interviewing candidates and keeping St Michael's future at the centre of their decisions. We also thank the congregation for patience and support; that encouragement has lightened a challenging task.

With February and our AGM just around the corner, now is a great time to consider joining Parish Council as we move ahead. Any Parish Council member would be happy to discuss the roles with you if you have questions.

We wish everyone a joyful Christmas season, and pray that God continues to bless us all.



Altar Guild Hijinks



Ellen and Leo



Helen Love and Stan Willow

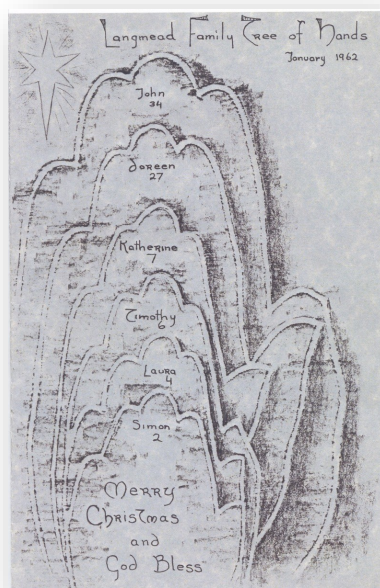
Dec 24, Christmas Eve Pageant

A Handy Activity?

Many years ago I had (then) baby Simon (now aged 60 ...) on my lap and was trying to make a copy of the shape and size his hand by drawing its outline on a piece of paper. Baby Simon reacted with his usual good nature. He was interested in what I was doing so he kept his fat little hand nice and still while I drew around it. (I still have that original copy – it is a treasure!)

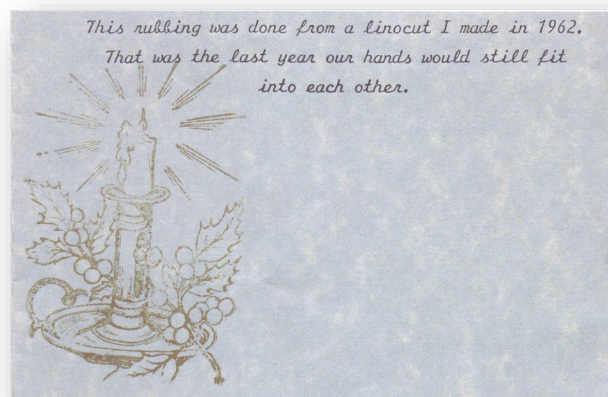
We then expanded the idea, and collected outlines of the left hand of each member of the family. The first photo shows the Langmead Family Tree of Hands. They are labelled from the parents down to the four children. That was in 1962 – the last year that our hands could still fit inside one another's.

The other photo shows a rubbing that I made (during the same winter) of a lino-cut of a brass candlestick (however did I manage to find time for such things?). The rubbings and the 'hands' design were converted into greetings cards that I could send to friends and relatives.



Langmead Family Tree of hands, created in 1962, and named from the parents down to the youngest. This was the latest that the hands could all fit inside one another in a cascade of ages.

Submitted by Doreen Langmead



A rubbing of a lino-cut of a brass candlestick, made the same winter.

A Beethoven Andante

The woodwind warbled wisely
Of how the dusk begins
Before the glow of sunset
Had left the violins:
And a cool flute spoke purely
As though some spirit far,
Within the sunset's hollow
Had lit the evening star.

But when a simple oboe
Sang low and shepherd-sweet,
It was the awaited summons
That made the dusk complete.
Oh, quietly it led us,
With crook of slender gold,
Across the starry pastures
Into the farthest fold.



Life in a Very Musical Family

I was the sixth of seven children. I always felt really lucky to have so many siblings, and was grateful that we were so close. I was especially close to my oldest brother Rae and to my sister Betty. The first five siblings were between 9 and 18 years older than me, while the last one was 4 years younger, and because of those spacings I grew up like an only child in many ways, even though I had two big-sister “mothers” as well as my biological one. Our parents were farmers, originally in southern Saskatchewan, but in 1946 they sold the farm and moved to Red Deer (Alberta), where a younger brother and I were born. We used to go back to south Saskatchewan during the summers to spend time with the two sets of grandparents, who lived on either side of the SK River.

I was fortunate to grow up in a very musical family. Dad played his fiddle for the barn dances around the communities, and was joined in that activity by our best friends (who played fiddle and piano). Mom taught herself how to play the guitar, and right from childhood I remember her singing lots of songs, especially ones from the post-war era and country or western. She had a beautiful voice but was shy, so she would never sing outside the home. Instead, she supported the barn dances by making huge crepe-paper flowers. Each of my three sisters played the piano, while one of my brothers became proficient in the six- and twelve-string guitar and in the banjo, so there was music in my life daily in one form or another. At Christmas time we would all sing around the piano.

The friends who played in the barn dances along with Dad also moved from SK to Alberta when we did. They lived on a farm thirty miles outside Red Deer (where I grew up), and we would visit one another throughout the Christmas holidays. Music was always involved in those visits, and we would also skate on the sloughs (swamps) that our brothers would clear for us.

Since ours was only a small two-bedroom house it was usually bedlam during the Christmas holidays, so Mom followed the tradition of cooking dinner on Christmas Eve after our presents were opened. She could then relax on Christmas Day, when we were all preoccupied with friends or gifts. As chaos transitioned to calm, I’m sure she was grateful for time to breathe before everyone returned again. The house seemed always to be full of people, laughter, cheer and merrymaking.

Submitted by Cheryl Pardue



The author aged about 18 months



Mom and the four kids in 1946, about to leave SK. There is snow on the ground and the youngest are warmly dressed, but Mom (with the guitar) and the oldest daughter are wearing short-sleeved blouses.

My, they were hardy in those days!

In Praise of MUSIC

Is Music a commodity to be valued and treasured? Handel's opera *Rodelinda* is definitely positive:

Art thou troubled? Music will calm thee. Art thou weary? Rest shall be thine!
Music – source of all gladness, heals thy sadness at her shrine ...
Music, music ever divine. Music, music calleth with voice divine.

When the welcome spring is smiling, all the earth with flow'rs beguiling
after winter's dreary reign (rain?),
Sweetest music doth attend her, heavenly harmonies doth lend her,
Chanting praises in her train.

Gilbert & Sullivan (in their opera *The Mikado*) thought Music was the best medium for a special eulogy to celebrate St Mike's most illustrious Warden:

On a tree by a river a little tom tit
Sang Willow, Stan Willow, Stan Willow!
And I said to him, 'Dicky bird, why do you sit
Singing Willow, Stan Willow, Stan Willow?

Is it weakness of intellect, birdy? (I cried),
Or a rather tough worm in your little inside?
With a shake of his poor little head he replied:
Oh Willow, Stan Willow, Stan Willow.

But Shakespeare, who though deep and long about most things connected with the human condition, didn't quite agree:

If Music be the food of love, play on ... give me excess of it.

Well, maybe – but most readers are not aware that what was unsaid was the hope that too much would make the sufferer so love-sick that s/he would thereby be cured of that affliction.

But perhaps Shelley's poem:

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory

may have been nearer the mark than he actually thought. See what the next article has to say about music in the memory!



Submitted by a parishioner

Music Really Does Vibrate in the Memory

At the age of 96, my mother joined her first choir. The retirement and care residence where she lives has a resident-wide singing group, called Singing Back the Years. They sing familiar songs from years past.

Every Tuesday about 20 people gather to sing together for an hour. Some, like L with a rich baritone, is obviously a man of many choirs past. He sings away enthusiastically, while helping a less adept singer on either side. B, who can no longer feed herself nor recognize her husband, never misses a word or a melody. C, who can no longer speak, hums along in a pure, pitch-perfect tone. This is the only time her voice is heard. My mom, with absolutely no short term memory and confused memories of the past, is nearly blind. She cannot read the words in the weekly printout, but remembers the words to each song as it cues up. Some voices are creaky or croaky, and one person is very shouty and often a line behind. No one chides or giggles or blinks an eye. After the hour, moods are lifted, the conversations full of joy and engagement. Many, by the time they reach the elevator down the hall, have forgotten where they've been or why. But for one hour, their minds have remembered melody, lyrics and emotions. They sing, mostly, on time, in pitch, and spot on with the words.

How can this be?

Thanks to advanced imaging of the brain, recent research has identified a separate place in the brain that holds musical memories, called the Music Memory Area (MMA). While dementia shrinks the brain and fills it with sticky material, the MMA remains robust long into a person's dementia, with little signs of shrinkage or stickiness. A gift in the dark confusion of dementia, music really is the last thing we forget!

Submitted by Jo Ellen Schobblom



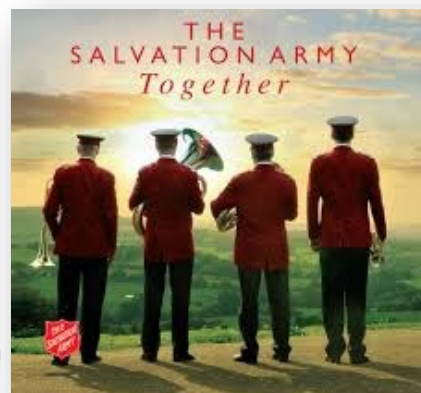
Editor's Footnote: My mother, deeply afflicted with memory loss, could not recall my name, but show her a piano and she could play many childhood tunes from her distant past.

Sounds of Christmas Music

I love Christmas music! It has always from childhood touched someplace deep within my soul. Listening to the carols brings back so many memories. There are so many old favourites, and it is always interesting to learn what is someone's favourite carol. My grandfather had an interesting choice – it was *"The Holly and the Ivy"*. Although this old English carol by an unknown author has a very perky tune, it dwells more on the Easter theme than the Christmas one (the holly bears the crown, red as blood, prickle of a thorn...) it is also interesting in that it is written in a hexatonic scale (i.e., only exactly 6 pitches or notes per octave).

Although I prefer the straight-forward simple versions of the old carols, I also find it fascinating to try new arrangements by some of my favourite Christian music arrangers as they employ new harmonies and rhythms in order to enhance the meanings of the carols. Some of those are quite beautiful and truly inspired. They all help us to remember the Gift that was given to us at Christmas.

Submitted by Trish Murray



The Wise Old Owl and Music

We're urged to dream and I always follow instructions. The other night I dreamt that I was God. It was a bit weird, even for a dream.

There I was, inside the big fir tree by the church, visiting the wise old owl. He looks after my celestial electronic office.

The Owl was crying for help. Here's how the conversation went.

"Dear God, I've got piles and piles of prayers whirling around me from supplicants praying for something they think they need but don't know what they want."

"Well, Mr. Owl, I can help you with that. Give them music. It's one of my greatest gifts to humankind."

"Oh, thank you, God. I'm not a songbird. But I hoot a good hoot when I'm out hunting."

"Don't worry. I'll give you some suggestions that will stimulate souls, warm hearts, make people want to dance."

"Great. Just what I need, God! Bring on the suggestions."

"Okay. We'll start with **Burl Ives** from the late 1930s – 1940s. His songs activate the music spot in peoples' brains. Here's a good start: "*Blue Tail Fly*",

"*Green Green Grass of Home*" and "*Big Rock Candy Mountain*".

Next give them **Johnny Cash** with his guitar and deep, resonant voice. He blends country, folk, gospel, and blues into a style that reaches into the hearts of people. Have a listen to these songs: "*I Heard the Lonesome Whistle*", "*Folsom Prison Blues*" and "*I Couldn't Keep From Crying*".

The Everly Brothers are terrific. Here's another group of songs to liven things up: "*Wake Up Little Susie*", "*All I Have to Do Is Dream*" and "*Bye Bye Love*"

And include **Neil Diamond** and his stream of hits including: "*Sweet Caroline*", "*Am...I Said*" and "*Song Sung Blue*"

"Thank you, God. What good advice! I'll get going on it right away."

"I could give you other treats from The Beatles, The Beach Boys, Simon & Garfunkel, and the Bee Gees, but let's try the first groups and see how things progress. If you get some cheerful feedback you may want to go upscale and add songs from Broadway musicals, hymn sings, and various easy listening music. Are you with me?"

"Definitely! And thanks a million."

Submitted by Jim Bullen



Editor's Footnote: Let Jim Bullen know if you would like to play any of the songs listed above and he will send you the Mpeg file(s).

His email address is: jim33@telus.com

Stitching at St Mike's

The St Mike's "Stitching Group" meets in the afternoon of the first and third Tuesday of every month. At present we have 27 names on our list; most gatherings have 10 to 12 people present, though we have seen attendances as high as 16 and as low as 4. Everyone is welcome, and there is no obligation to work on any particular programme; in fact, several people who attend frequently are actually members of other churches, but they come to join us, and they work on whatever they choose to do. Some carry on working on their own projects, some come just to visit, while two charming ladies like to sort my jumbled containers of threads and fabrics. Others are involved in a new project that we have started for the church.



For this new project we are creating a special banner to hang from the balcony at the back of the church. We have divided it into 6 sections; each section measures 24 × 24 inches, and represents a colour of the rainbow. Four panels are ready to be displayed, and the last two are nearing completion; we hope that the whole banner will be completed by the New Year. On each panel have been stitched Indigenous words of wisdom for the corresponding colour. The rainbow theme also represents the LGBTQIA+ community. In addition, a gold cross has been couched onto each panel. The final challenge is deciding just exactly how we are going to hang them.

Submitted by Diana Caleb

Editor's footnote: The full "colours of the rainbow" actually lists seven colours, but the sixth one (indigo, a blueish-purple) cannot easily be distinguished or described.

Ode to the Hymn

A whispered prayer begins the tune,
A choir's swell beneath the moon,
Or sun-drenched panes, a holy light,
With voices rising, pure and bright.
From organ's deep, resounding hum,
To joyful praise, the praises come,
A tapestry of sound takes hold,
More precious far than earthly gold.



Organ at SMAAC

Music has been an integral part of the life and worship at St Michael's since before its consecration in 1883. Its organists took on the job of directing and training the choir, as well as providing music for services all through the year.

The first organ used by the parish was destroyed by fire in 1883 but was replaced when the church was rebuilt the same year. In 1929 a new pump organ was installed. In 1953 it was replaced by an electric harmonic instrument, and the old pump organ was taken upstairs to the balcony, where it came into service for the junior choir. The first pipe organ was built for St Michael's by Hugo Spilker of Victoria; it underwent several refurbishments and enhancements, including expanded ranks of pipes, during the following 30 years. That instrument has been the basis of numerous concerts, recordings, performances of Stainer's "Crucifixion" and excerpts from Handel's "Messiah", besides providing beautiful music for the weekly sung Eucharists right up to the present.

When the original harmonium from 1883 was deemed redundant it was bought by the author, who still has it in his basement (see photo). It appears to be in good working order, despite its age; all the notes still play, and the bellows still work when pumped.

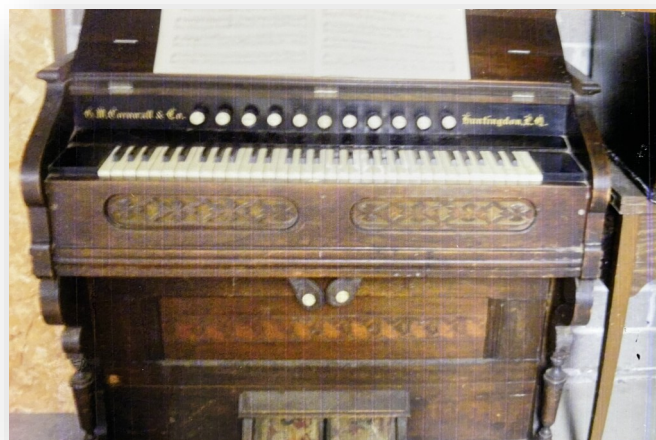
Unfortunately records concerning the organ and the choir were not kept systematically, but the following are known to have been appointed as organists during the 142 years since the church was consecrated:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| • Isabel Heal (1883--?) | • Joan Brackenridge (1983--1985) |
| • Ada Jackson (1922--1947) | • Cathy Mountain (1985--1987) |
| • Eva Rogers (Wife of Rev. Jack Rogers) (1956--1965) | • Michael McGuire (1987--1995) |
| • Geoffrey Thornburn, Michael McLure, Judy Hill (daughter of Rev. Bill Hill, David Millard (1980--1983) | • Grahame Baker (1995--2000) |
| | • Tony Booker (2000--2022) |
| | • David Palmer (2022--2024) |
| | • Patrick Sibley (2025--present) |



A recent episode involving a musical mouse appeared to threaten the integrity of the present pipe organ, when some of the notes suddenly made noises that were unspeakably awful. Investigation revealed damage by a highly persistent church mouse, whose taste for electric cables and wires equalled its lust for poinsettia leaves. Unknown hours of its toil came to nought when a team of fearless parishioners cleared, cleaned and mended the damage.

Submitted by Peter Goddard



The Huron Carol

Canada's most famous and oldest Christmas hymn is "**The Huron Carol**", written in the 1640s by Jesuit missionary Jean de Brébeuf in the Wendat language for the Huron people, adapting a French folk tune to tell the Nativity story with Indigenous imagery, becoming a cherished Canadian tradition and national treasure.

The original Title of this hymn was *Jesous Ahatonhia* (Jesus, He Is Born) and the tune is based on the French folk song "Une Jeune Pucelle" (A Young Maid). The English lyrics were written by Jesse Edgar Middleton in 1926. This hymn's cultural significance is that it blends uniquely European Christian narrative with Indigenous culture, using imagery like "Gitchi Manitou" (Great Spirit) and "rabbit skin" wraps.

The Huron Carol has faced scrutiny owing to its colonial origins and stereotypical "noble savage" imagery in the English lyrics. When creating an English version some 300 years later, Middleton undercut de Brebeuf's original intent to be faithful to Wendat (Huron) beliefs and narratives. Not only did he draw upon colonial misunderstandings of indigenous life (rabbit skins, gifts of fox and beaver pelt); he also mistakenly calls the Great Spirit by a Cree, rather than Wendat, name ("Gitchi-Manitou"). This reflect Christian missionaries' complex history with Indigenous peoples, leading some denominations to support new lyrics acknowledging colonialism or singing in the original Wendat.

While the beautiful melody and historical significance remain, modern discussions encourage reimagining it to honor Indigenous perspectives or focus on reconciliation, rather than erasing it entirely.

You are encouraged to read the submission by D L Seaborn Niw_Hk_M_Kanak (<https://seabornsong.com/the-huron-carol/>) which provides alternative lyrics and a discussion from an indigenous perspective. Middleton's English lyrics are included here for your understanding of this important part of our Canadian history on our path to reconciliation.

Submitted by Helen Love



Jesous Ahatonhia

'Twas in the moon of winter-time
When all the birds had fled,
That mighty Gitchi Manitou
Sent angel choirs instead;
Before their light the stars grew dim,
And wandering hunters heard the hymn:

Refrain:

Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria.

Within a lodge of broken bark
The tender Babe was found,
A ragged robe of rabbit skin
Enwrapp'd His beauty round;
But as the hunter braves drew nigh,
The angel song rang loud and high.

Refrain

O children of the forest free,
O sons of Manitou,
The Holy Child of earth and heaven
Is born today for you.
Come kneel before the radiant Boy
Who brings you beauty, peace and joy.

Refrain



Difficult Choices

There must be about as many different styles of music as there are pieces written to be played. None is wrong or right, just different. We can hold opinions that may prove to be popular or the converse, and unlike so many thing in life, our choices of music are free. When I am in my garden, amid the general noise of traffic on the main road I can identify someone whose choice of 'music' is loud enough to fracture any ear-drums, but that may simply be a matter of volume control. What about the unpopular instruments? Bagpipes, for example?



Two interesting encounters come to mind. One was in central Ottawa, at the close of some conference. On a hot summer's day I wandered outside and climbed the river bank for a change of scene and air, and discovered a family of cats, presumably feral, chasing mice among the overgrowth. It was then that I heard music, penetrating and unmelodious, wafting towards me over the top of the river bank. I climbed higher, and found I was overlooking a large flat area, where a dozen or more kilt-clad pipers were tuning their bagpipes before bursting forth with some Scottish lament. Probably the last thing I expected to find in the centre of that un-Scottish city.

The other encounter was in Europe, this time in Spain. The Spanish, as we know, dine late in the evening to avoid the heat of summer, and as I was walking back to base through the Park called 'El Retiro' around 11 pm I heard the unmistakable sound of bagpipes. Curious to uncover a Spaniard who could play such an un-Spanish instrument, I ferreted out the origin of the music and found it was a young ginger-haired student, who confessed that his room-mate couldn't stand his playing indoors so each evening he came to this spot in a hidden spinney where he could play his bagpipes without being seen.

Submitted by Elizabeth Griffin

Silent Night

One of my most special Christmas memories took place many years ago when my family and I lived in the Philippines. Fortunately for us, English was widely spoken throughout the islands, so it was not difficult to feel at home in the church that we visited mostly frequently.

That church was Holy Trinity Church in Manila, and one service that I still recall vividly was a Christmas Eve service. The lights were dimmed, the candles were lit, and the congregation was kneeling and singing hymns as, one by one, the children from the Sunday School made their way up the aisle to take their places in the Nativity scene at the front of the church. Then a magical moment: As we began to sing my favourite Christmas hymn, "Silent Night", a small child, probably no more than two or three years old, walked up the aisle by herself to place the baby Jesus in the manger.

I will never forget the peace and beauty of that moment, as we all sang together on our knees in the candle-light and watched this tiny child carry the baby Jesus to his place in the manger.

Submitted by Diana Caleb



Holy Trinity Church in Manila

The Pipe Organ in St. Ann's Chapel

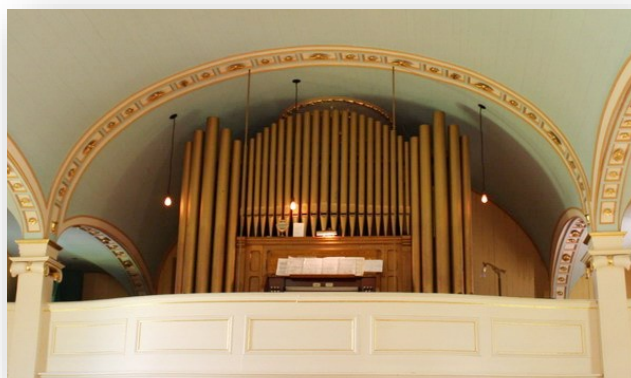
As a retired Pipe Organ builder and tuner, I have experienced a number of curious encounters while servicing various instruments.

The Chapel of St Ann's was once a home for the Sisters of St Ann (formerly St Ann's Academy, in downtown Victoria). A colleague and I went to the chapel on a tuning visit, during which we oiled the electric blower's motor and then tuned the pipes (made by Casavant Freres in Quebec in about 1913) for the two-manual and pedal organ. In order to access the blower motor in the attic, we required a long extension ladder. Well (!) the novice nuns, seeing two young men in the chapel, were shocked, and when we explained that we needed a ladder, they said that they must consult the Mother Superior for direction.

When the ladder arrived, we set it up behind the organ and climbed to the ceiling hatch. The motor and fan producing the wind were probably installed in the 1920s to electrify the organ, as an alternative to pumping by hand to fill the large wind reservoir. Years of use had taken a toll on the old motor, and oil had leaked onto a plate placed below. The plate happened to be a Spode square china plate, probably quite valuable. We admired the old motor with its brass and glass oil reservoirs, and its lovely green painted fan woodwork with yellow pinstriping.

We tuned the mellow pipes and admired the ebony and ivory controls, all hand engraved. One appeared silent, but we later found it was attached to a small bell, a 'souffleur', to call for the pumper to raise the wind.

Years later, after another visit for cleaning, we found the pumping handle and hardware, including the bell, stored under the reservoir. We hooked it up and tested it, and were delighted to find that it still worked as intended. Weeks later, we had a frantic telephone call from the chapel's organist, who had to play for two weddings the following weekend. The blower had died and the motor needed to be replaced. What to do? Our reply was simple: find a muscular young man and show him the pumping handle in the side of the case. Et voilà! All was saved.



The Organ in St. Ann's Chapel

Submitted by Grant Smalley

Cadenza

"Cadenza" is a term in musical language that means an ornamental passage, which is sometimes improvised or written out. It is a special part of a piece that is designed to be played by a soloist to showcase the artist. An example is the last verse of the Evening hymn, *"The Spacious Firmament on High"*, which goes:

"What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though no real voice nor sound
amid their radiant orbs be found?
In Wisdom's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth in glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine."

A Christmas Memory

I have always loved music, but unfortunately, I need a bucket to carry a tune. That said, I still enjoy the musical talents of others. I especially enjoy a good choir. And that reminds me ...

In 1983 Terry, baby Robyn and I had just moved to New Brunswick. It was our first Christmas away from home and family here in Victoria. Terry's parents, Irene and Doug Hudson, arranged for us all to meet in Ottawa so we could spend Christmas together with Terry's brother Michael.

We arrived by car after a long and snowy traverse of Eastern Canada. We spent several wonderful days together in a hotel with Robyn shuffling between our rooms and family. On a very cold and snowy Christmas Eve we went to the midnight service at Ottawa's Christ Church Cathedral.

All was well on arrival until the first organ notes boomed throughout the cathedral. Midnight was also a bit too late for Robyn and she decided that the music was too loud for her liking and she made it known. Robyn had just turned one and was no slouch in the noise business. Her wailing and crying filled the cathedral with gusto. She was so loud that the parishioners around us, and we ourselves, could not hear the service of the choir over her wailing.

I got the look from Nana Hudson and quietly took Robyn and myself out to the car. It was a cold and crisp midnight as in the song, with the snow deep and even. I started up our good old Volare station wagon and warm air from the heater filled the interior. I made a bed for Robyn next to me and sat in the car and she quickly calmed down and fell asleep.

I sat in the car and admired the beauty of the winter snowscape with the beautiful cathedral front and centre of the windshield. The music from the cathedral wafted into the car and filled me with peace. Though I was alone in the car with my sleeping daughter, I still think of the tranquility and peace of that night with carols and organ music providing a memory of why that night is so important to us all.

Submitted by Stan Willow



A Special Musical Memory

Music has always been one of my pleasures over the years. I have sung in choirs since the age of ten, starting in my home church in England and in university and in parishes in Canada (including St Michael's) many years ago.

One occasion was especially meaningful for me, when Phyll and I were on holiday in England one summer. I was on a course for a week in St Augustine's College in Canterbury, and we were invited to form a choir to sing Evensong one day at the Cathedral while their own choir were all on holiday. Happily there were enough of us with experience who could make up a reasonable group, and we were thrilled to be able to say that we had sung in the choir at the central cathedral of the Anglican communion (!)

That was many years ago, and I have now lost my ability to sing, but I can still enjoy the sound of good music whenever I hear it. Thank you to our own choir and organist for leading us in our musical worship Sunday by Sunday.

Submitted by Geoff Huggill

The Sound of Christmas

In mid-December I start listening to Christmas music. Like most people these days I listen on an app. This year, I thought I would try out the “Christmas from the 70’s and 80’s” channels.

Unfortunately, other than the odd big hit, I didn’t recognize most of the songs. Despite that being the period I grew up in, it wasn’t the music I grew up listening to. In those years I always knew it was Christmas time when dad got out the Firestone and Goodyear Tire Christmas albums. They were from the 60’s, and I don’t really know how he managed to get them all, because he didn’t buy tires on a yearly basis. But that was the sound of Christmas. I played them over and over again all season, singing along with the familiar carols.

Today, they are still the carols I love, sung by long-forgotten artists. Fortunately my app has a “Vintage Christmas Carols” channel, and that is where I find the good old carols.

The actual records were lost when my mum moved out of the family home a decade or so ago, but the carols are still played and to me, that is the sound of Christmas.



Submitted by
Angela Goddard



A Peaceful New Year Wish

Protect your peace in the new year by choosing what nurtures your energy and releasing what drains it. Say no without guilt. Set boundaries that feel firm but loving. Surround yourself with people who support your growth, not those who take advantage of your softness. Give yourself space to rest, reset, and reconnect with what matters. Limit the chaos you allow near your heart. Listen to your intuition the first time it speaks. Protecting your peace is not about shutting the world out. It is about creating a life where your spirit can finally breathe.

Submitted by Nancy Paxton

A Friend Found In Music

by Bryanna T. Perkins

Music is the ocean
That pulls me to the shore.
Music is the rhythm
That moves me to the core.
Music is the therapy
I need when I feel blue.
Music lifts my spirits
To make sure I pull through.
The times when I'm most cheerful,
It's clear music was there.
Music is the needed friend
When no one seems to care.

Final Musical Thoughts

Life without music would b flat.

Choir practice – Hymnastics.

Accordion – a bagpipe with pleats.

Those who wish to sing always find a song.

Take time to laugh. It is the music of the soul.

May your heart and home be filled with music.

May your Christmas be filled with happiness, hope and music.

Q. What do you get when you step on a piano?

A. Foot-notes.

Christmas bells are ringing their message loud and clear:

Good luck, good health and happiness throughout the coming year.

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass;

it's about learning to dance in the rain. – Anonymous

Why not just live in the moment, especially if it has a good beat!

Some days there won't be a song in your heart. Sing anyway!

Submitted by Valda Kitching



Good News on Thursday Newsletter

If you would like to subscribe to receive the weekly newsletter, please visit our website
<https://www.stmikevictoria.ca/subscribers>



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The Messenger is an occasional magazine to the parish from the parishioners of St. Michael and All Angels' Anglican Church. The Messenger is a communication means for members of the parish. It does not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the editors, or the church.

While the newsletter exists for parishioners to contribute their news, opinions and views, the editors may edit articles in order to facilitate understanding and fit space.

Contributions should report on parish activities, advertise upcoming events or be original literary articles, that are church related, up to a maximum of 500 words.

Please send submissions to the church office, preferably by e-mail to:

admin@stmikevictoria.ca.

We acknowledge that for thousands of years the Coast Salish, Nuuchah-nulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw peoples have walked gently on the unceded territories where we now live, work, worship, and play.

We seek a new relationship with the first peoples here; one based on honour and respect.