

MUSIC
Jessica Nelson
Organist/Choirmaster

In 2016, the music ministry at All Saints' was budgeted about \$4000 and spent all of that. Our significant expenditures included music and liturgy conference scholarships, annual licensing fees, continuing education, and sheet music.

We made two significant changes this fall: new choir folders and new vestments. The choir folders were a substantial expense, but with care, will last at least 10 years. Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, we also outfitted the choir in cassocks and surplices and retired our old vestments after 20+ years of service. The new vestments and folders are very handsome and are an outward symbol of the care with which we conduct liturgies at All Saints'.

The music program also had its first fundraiser in my tenure at All Saints'. We sold t-shirts with a familiar All Saints' saying printed on them in the fall. I am proud to share that fundraiser was extremely successful.

ABOUT CHILDREN'S CHOIR:

The All Saints' Children's Choir is growing in skill and ability, and is steadily growing in number. We have an average of 7 choristers for rehearsal each week. We have continued to learn about our Anglican liturgical heritage and the role of music in the liturgy, as well as developing music vocabulary and reading skills. I have strived to complement what our children are learning in Catechesis. I hope that this program will see even more growth in 2017 and I suspect that offering Wednesday night programming for adults may increase attendance in this choir. We continued our new tradition of ending each rehearsal with a "Clothesline Collect," a short prayer broken into short pieces that we sort and display on the board for everyone to pray together. The Clothesline Collects were featured in articles by the Center for Liturgy and Music at Virginia Theological Seminary and by "Building Faith," a publication that promotes best practices for children's spiritual formation. In order for All Saints' to offer Advent programming this year geared towards children, this group began their winter break early.

ABOUT ADULT CHOIR:

The Adult Choir continues to thrive, especially in quality. In 2016, this group provided music most Sunday mornings, as well as special services, such as the annual Advent Lessons and Carols service, which was well-attended. Our choir is developing facility with more sophisticated works from the Anglican tradition and their repertoire has expanded to include more *a cappella* music and world music. Their level of musicianship continues to exceed my expectations. On Wednesday nights, the adult choir has continued our tradition of ending rehearsal with a short Compline. This, I believe, has exposed them to a new (to many of them) form of corporate prayer, and has provided a time for the choir to specifically pray with and for one another. Ending rehearsals with intentional prayer has been an enriching and community building experience.

The Y'all Saints Choir has continued in 2016. The idea behind this group is that there is very little commitment – all one needs to do is attend a short rehearsal immediately

prior to the service they sing. This choir sang on a handful of Sundays this year. This choir sings accessible unison anthems and has included members of Children's Choir (and occasionally their parents!), former adult choir members, and other friends of music at All Saints'.

ABOUT YOUR ORGANIST/CHOIRMASTER:

Personally, I found 2016 to be a professionally fulfilling and exciting year.

In the summer, I directed the Mississippi Conference on Church Music and Liturgy for the third time – a nationally recognized and respected conference in its field, now in its 42nd year. I felt that the conference was very successful – attendance was comparable to previous years and the conference received good reviews in professional journals.

In the fall, I was one of twelve participants from all over the country invited to return for the second symposium of the Center for Liturgy and Music at Virginia Theological Seminary, funded in part by the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship. This symposium, "Raising the Song: Creating Communities that Sing," was a continuation of the previous year's event and allowed me to work in intimate settings with Marilyn Haskel, Ysaye Barnwell, and Alice Parker, three internationally-recognized musicians and composers. Prior to this symposium, I attended a grant recipients' colloquium at the Calvin Institute at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In addition to my work for the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, I serve on the national board of the Leadership Program for Musicians, Church Music Forward, and was appointed in the fall to chair the diocesan music and liturgy committee.

In addition to the above, I continued to serve on the music faculty of the University of North Alabama, taught two courses in the spring semester at Northeast Mississippi Community College, and continued to teach piano lessons in my office at All Saints', both to members of All Saints' and non-members. I also continued composing in my spare time.

LOOKING AHEAD:

I anticipate the financial need of All Saints' Music Ministry being greater in 2017. Purchasing well-crafted, recently-written, liturgically appropriate music for All Saints' ensembles is a priority. Also, I would like to seek out more opportunities for continuing education in 2017 to continue to develop my choral conducting and organ playing skills, as well as making professional connections my field. Also, one of my long-range goals for this parish is to provide consistent, quality arts and music-related programming. My hope is that this would include, but not be limited to, guest artist recitals. All Saints' is an excellent venue for chamber and solo recitals as well as small choral ensemble performances. Hosting events like these, which appeal to a wide range of people, is one way that All Saints' can continue to engage the wider community.