

## Music at Immanuel Lutheran Church

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises! Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody! With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!... (Psalm 98:4–6)

Martin Luther is often and famously quoted: “Next to theology there is no art which is the equal of music, for she alone, after theology, can do what otherwise only theology can accomplish, namely, quiet and cheer up the soul of man, which is clear evidence that the devil, the originator of depressing worries and troubled thoughts, flees from the voice of music just as he flees from the words of theology.” Music is that important to our lives as Christians!

We have set aside July to remember music and church musicians during our 150th anniversary celebration. There are many reasons that make music so important to us. First, music is a special gift from God. In its sounds we are reminded of the intricacy of creation and the intelligent God who orders even the atoms and waves to form patterns and beauty. Second, as Luther points out, music can comfort and cheer us. Think how we as Christians will sing songs – ‘joyful’ songs – even at funerals! The rich imagery and powerful words of our hymns point us to our hope in Jesus Christ – the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Third, music connects us with other Christians. When we stand (or sit) together in the sanctuary and sing songs, our voices are joined together as one in the body of Christ. As we sing, we are reminded that we are not alone on this earth.

Immanuel has used music in various forms and expressions since her beginnings. Pastor Wiegner, Immanuel’s first Pastor, used a melodeon organ to accompany the singing of the congregation and the school children. He also made use of a violin. After his death, the organ was purchased by the congregation and was later sold back to the Wiegner family. In 1892 the congregation bought a reed organ for \$210.00 which was used until the construction of the current brick church. When no one was available to lead singing with the organ, a song leader or ‘Vorsaenger’ would lead the congregation in singing. Leonard Rosel was the first to serve in this position.

Soon a mixed choir was formed to add special music to festive occasions and assisted at funerals. The choir has continued to function more or less regularly, with occasional breaks. Today, the Adult Choir under the direction of Pastor Squire enhances the services several times during the year.

Pastor Wiegner was the first organist. Volunteers assisted including Mr. C.H Moeller and Elizabeth Wiegner. In 1903 the congregation annually engaged an organist. The first to serve in this capacity was Sophie Moeller. Many student organists and others have served as Immanuel's organist. Current organists include Sharon Stohr, Emma Squire and Carol Pahl.

Around the time of the construction of the brick church in the 1920s, an orchestra was maintained within the congregation. Immanuel Orchestra included Helen, Ruth and Laura Brammer, Harlan Sorenson, Wilmer Rosel, and Wilmer Mueller. This group played for the Laying the Cornerstone service. They also played for community events.

At the time of the construction of the current church, an organ was purchased for \$3000.00 from the Wangerin Organ Company located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The console was upgraded in 1973 by Eugene Doutt of Watertown, South Dakota. In 2020, the organ advanced to an electronic solid-state instrument by Reuter organ company located in Lawrence, Kansas.

Other instruments in use include a piano in the sanctuary donated anonymously in 1972. A keyboard is located in the balcony. Pianos are located in the basement and music room. Chimes were installed in 1961, after a fundraiser concert arranged by Mrs. Leon Titus. Orchestra bells are used for solos and descants. Middle and high school band students have played for the Christmas Eve service and formed VBS bands. Mel Schroeder continues to share his trumpet during special services.

### **Organists since 1903**

Mrs. Sophie Mueller 1903 - 1st organist, Mrs. August (Elizabeth Wiegner) Janzow Agnes Mueller, Esther Mueller, Ada (Wilke) Kuehl, Ruth (Brammer) Wendling, Gertrude Boening, Emma Kuehl, Mrs. Doris (Marcks) Ruechel

Schmarzo 1951-1958, Paulyn Stumpe Ruechel, Mrs. Leon Titus 1959-1962, Mrs. Freida Janzow Crouch 1961-1963, Donna (Hollatz) Whittle 1962-1964, Joyce (Rachut) Westrem 1965-1968, John Westrem 1964-1969, Janice (Jacot) Luhrs 1965-1969, Pamela (Perau) Sampson 1965-1969, Lowana (Hegland) Hannam 1966-1970, Sarah (Madson) Moore 1967-1971, Karen Feldt 1969-1973, Mary (Dockstader) Sommerfeld 1970-1975, Susan (Brewer) Skogerboe, Cathy (Brewer) Cunningham, Mary (Feldt) Dinesen 1974-1979, Carol (Jacot) Pahl 1979-present, Sharon (Marcks) Stohr 1980-present, Nancy (May) Woods 2012-2017, Emma Squire 2024-present.

### **Choirs/ Choir directors of the Senior/Adult/Immanuel Singers, Junior, Cherub and Sunday School choirs**

Directors include Doris Schmarzo, Leon Titus, Irene Titus, Arnold Feldt, Doris Betke, Mary Schmidt, Tim Peters, Carol Pahl, Mark Squire, Janet Wuerffel, Lu Groth, Ann Dieterich, Emma Squire, Marilyn Schotanus, Jan Horgan, Karla Pahl.

We give God thanks for his gifts of music, musicians, and, most of all, the good news of his Son's death and resurrection which binds us together and bring us to life!

Carol Pahl and Pastor Mark Squire