

MUSIC
Jessica Nelson
Organist/Choirmaster
Assistant for Liturgy

In 2014, the music ministry at All Saints' was budgeted \$3252 and spent all of that in addition to using funds from the music money market account to cover a one-time continuing education expense. Other significant expenditures included hiring guest musicians for the Bluegrass Mass and Parish Picnic, licensing fees, and sheet music.

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 9-10 choristers for rehearsal each week, including singers who are not members of All Saints'. 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 group will see even more growth in 2015 and I suspect that offering Wednesday night programming for adults may increase attendance in this choir. Some highlights from our year: Children's Choir sang for a Wednesday night potluck, the Sunday after All Saints' Day, as well as a choral prelude for the 4:30 service on Christmas Eve. We also made a video Christmas card to share via social media. (Check it out! <https://vimeo.com/114258669>) We also began ending each rehearsal with a "Clothesline Collect," a short prayer broken into short pieces that we put in order and display on a magnetic clothesline for everyone to pray together. This also teaches Children's Choir about formulas for prayer. Here's an example of a completed collect, in the appropriate order:

<i>How do we describe God?</i>	<i>What has God done?</i>	<i>What would we like God to do?</i>	<i>Why would we like God to do this?</i>	<i>How do we end our prayer?</i>
All-knowing God,	who is the source of all wisdom:	help us at school and while we play,	so that we may know you in all that we do;	through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Amen.

ABOUT ADULT CHOIR:

The Adult Choir continues to grow, especially in quality. In 2014, this group provided music most Sunday mornings, as well as special services, such as the annual Advent Lessons and Carols service, which was particularly 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 been ending their rehearsal with a short Compline service. 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. This group has also made several recordings to share via social media.

ABOUT HANDBELLS:

Our new handbell ensemble continued in 2014. It is comprised of 4-5 ringers who meet regularly for rehearsal on Tuesday nights and play on Sunday mornings about once a month. This ensemble is intergenerational, and includes musicians of varying ability. Having this group participate in worship has

continued to enhance both the music program and our liturgical life. Because of the availability of appropriate repertoire for a group of this size, we decided in the fall of 2014 to begin rehearsing every other Tuesday night. This is still adequate time to learn new music and to play for Sunday services about once a month.

ABOUT YOUR ORGANIST/CHOIRMASTER:

Personally, I found 2014 to be a professionally fulfilling and exciting year. I learned in January that I passed the Colleague Exam of the American Guild of Organists. Also in January, I had a choral work released by Paraclete Press, one of the premier publishers of sacred music in the United States. In the summer, I directed the Mississippi Conference on Church Music and Liturgy for the first time – a nationally recognized and respected conference in its field, now in its 40th year. I felt that the conference was very successful – attendance increased from previous years and the conference received good reviews in professional journals. In the fall, I composed two pieces for All Saints' Choirs – a setting of *There is no rose*, a 15th century English text for the Adult Choir, and a setting of *Silent Night* for the Children's Choir. Both groups exceeded my expectations with their performances of these pieces. In December, I had an article about clergy/musician relationships published in *Church Music Forward*, the quarterly publication of the organization of the same name dedicated to “preserving traditions with imagination.” I've also continued my work with the Diocesan Music and Liturgy committee.

In addition to the above, I continue to serve on the music faculty of the University of North Alabama, but transitioned in the fall to teaching online only, after commuting twice a week for four years. I also continue to teach piano lessons in my office at All Saints', both to members of All Saints' and non-members.

NEW IN 2014:

2014 saw the official addition of the Y'All Saints Choir to our offerings. 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 a few times in 2014, most notably for Christmas Lessons and Carols on December 28 – historically a low-attendance Sunday. 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'.

LOOKING AHEAD:

I anticipate the financial need of All Saints' Music Ministry being greater in 2015. Purchasing well-crafted, recently-written, liturgically appropriate music for all of All Saints' ensembles is a priority. Also, I would like to seek out more opportunities for continuing education in 2015 to continue to develop my choral conducting and organ playing skills, as well as making professional connections my field. There are also a few occasional purchases that need to be made soon, such as music stands and other supplies. I am beginning to consider fundraising ideas for the Music Fund to supplement our budgeted amount.

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.