

THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM  
FOR  
MUSICIANS, INC.

**Leading to the  
Leadership Program for Musicians Certificate of Church Music**

A program of  
The Episcopal Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Presbyterian Association of Musicians  
and  
United Church of Christ Musicians Association

LEADERSHIP OF CONGREGATIONAL SONG  
GUITAR

By

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***(To see the full document you may purchase the course through***

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# INTRODUCTION

## Nature of the Curriculum

The purpose of the Leadership Program for Musicians is to reach out and support dedicated music leaders who may be under-trained to fulfill the opportunities with which their Christian service presents them. The planners of the program intend to embrace these dedicated people and to offer them a new sense of their capacity to grow and to learn while integrating and appreciating their past experience. The program seeks to build on experience in the local congregation while helping the student to grow in critical judgment and to expose the student to the very best musical practices. As such it is a performance-based curriculum with fulfillment of assignments through demonstration as well as practical discussion.

Special care should be given to the choice of the faculty member(s) for this course. It is vital that the teachers be sensitive to individuals, patient, flexible and able to give genuine encouragement.

This curriculum is for use in training leaders of congregational song. Equivalent sections addressing organ, piano, vocal (cantor) and guitar are included. It is expected that the instructors of these tracks will work together to determine which material is best taught to the entire class and which will be presented in divided sessions. Some participants will be musicians trained on their instrument through private instruction or collegiate pedagogy; however, it is probable that many participants will be organists who have learned to play the instrument largely on their own. Others will be local piano teachers or young musicians leading worship music with piano. Still others will be singers or guitarists who exercise this same ministry.

This is a course designed to develop and perfect skills in hymn-playing and service accompaniment. It emphasizes support of the congregation and the development of strong, informed and inspired leadership. It will be important for the participant to be exposed to the diverse hymnody and service music, while becoming more fluent in the use and opportunities within the denomination in which they serve.

To this end, assignments should be given reflecting each student's own tradition. Suggestions are included in the curriculum. Care should be taken that assignments can be played with security and confidence. Because it is likely that the class will include participants at many skill levels, it may be desirable to divide sections accordingly. For example, the organist track might be three smaller groups according to those who were comfortable playing pedals, those who used pedals, but lacked security and those who did not play pedals at all. For some students, the assignments in anthem accompaniment and simple improvisation will need to be replaced with additional work in hymn-playing and service leadership. Teachers have also found that continued training (into the second year of the LPM courses) was necessary in order to provide the security and skills required. It is very important that teachers feel free to be flexible with the curriculum and modify assignments as needed. It is possible that the course will include some musicians with a high level of proficiency. The addition of such topics as console-conducting, score-reading, transposition, modulation and simple improvisation could enrich their work.

The instruments played by the students will also vary. It is likely that most of them will play electronic organs, pianos or small pipe organs each Sunday. It will be important to plan to teach the course in a

situation which will not be intimidating to the students. To this end, the teacher should provide ample time for discussion of registration and other specific concerns the student might express for their own instrument.

## **Auditors**

This course has rich material for anyone interested in leading congregational song. Many have enjoyed auditing this course, participated in class discussions and enriched by their learning. However, it is important to understand that auditing the course will not lead to the certificate or any future credit hours.

## **Standards and Benchmarks**

**Standard 1: Participant will be able to provide strong, sensitive and skillful leadership of congregational song with a guitar.**

**Benchmark 1.1 Participant will develop text study habits leading to appropriate song leadership.**

**Benchmark 1.2 Participant will understand and demonstrate music marking for a variety of technique reminders.**

**Benchmark 1.3 Participant will choose and maintain tempo appropriate to selection and situation.**

**Benchmark 1.4 Participant will choose and demonstrate a variety of introduction styles for hymns and service music.**

**Benchmark 1.5 Participant will understand the methods of improvisation and demonstrate accordingly.**

## **Session 1**

The use of the guitar in worship is founded solidly on biblical precedent. The Psalms come immediately to mind with their frequent mention of instrumental praise (e.g. Ps. 33:2; 71:22~23; 92:3; 144:9), and even a cursory reading of the history of Israel reveals the regular use of stringed instruments in worship.

Today, the re-emergence of plucked stringed instruments (especially the acoustic guitar) in Episcopal worship can be traced to the 1960s, an era now famous for its proliferation of folk music. Popular singers like Peter, Paul, and Mary; Joan Baez; Bob Dylan; and Pete Seeger (to name a few) captured the public imagination with their simple, immediate, troubadour style, reflecting the concerns of the day in song. The drug culture, the sexual revolution, and the protest against the war in Vietnam were all critical elements in the formation of a new counterculture.

The nearly simultaneous appearance of the Jesus Movement (a "counter"-counterculture) and the beginning of the charismatic renewal converted much of this dynamic energy and brought it, often through the popular Christian coffeehouse venue, into the more formal church environment.

In recent years, the use of the guitar in corporate worship has had moderate success - its presence has not always been an enhancement to the occasion of worship. The problem, however, usually has to do more with the insensitive use of the instrument than the instrument itself. The player's lack of skill and/or rehearsal time, the inability to be heard, and repertoire inappropriate to the setting or event are commonly cited grievances. Any of these factors can foster misunderstanding or prejudice against a genre of sacred song that has long been a part of Christian tradition.

Just as a good organist or pianist will employ specific techniques to lead congregational singing, so must the guitarist. Playing for one's own enjoyment is different from leading singing around a campfire which is different still from playing in the context of liturgical worship. The same song might be used in each scenario, but it will necessarily be played differently in order to be effective.

### **Choosing a guitar to accompany congregational singing**

The choice of an instrument will depend on the player, the circumstance in which it will be used, and the musical material to be played. The most commonly used folk guitars are the six-string and twelve-string steel-strung instruments. Either is suitable for leading corporate song. The use of a pick (or plectrum) is strongly recommended.