

THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM  
FOR  
MUSICIANS, INC.

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

A program of

The Episcopal Church

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Presbyterian Association of Musicians

and

The United Church of Christ Musicians Association

PHILOSOPHY of CHURCH MUSIC

YEAR ONE

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

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# Philosophy of Church Music Syllabus

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Time/location: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Standards for the course**

- The student will become acquainted with various historic and contemporary views of church music.
- The student will form and/or refine a philosophy of church music that is responsible, consistent, and subtle.
- The student will improve in the ability to articulate, in speech and in writing, practical applications of a philosophy of church music.

## **Components of the class sessions**

There are twenty 20- to 30-minute class sessions. These class sessions will include:

- lectures, during which the teacher presents information and models methods of synthesizing this information;
- class activities, during which students learn from one another and refine their ideas collaboratively; and
- individual student presentations, during which each student practices communicating his or her ideas.

## **Evaluation**

Each student is expected to:

- attend all class sessions unless given permission from the teacher to be absent;
- participate in all class activities;
- complete and submit all written assignments on time; and
- successfully complete a final project.

## **Final project**

The final project will arise from the student's philosophy of church music, formed and/or refined by this course, and will be in one of the following forms, or some other alternative approved by the teacher.

- Write a three-to-four-page philosophy of church music.
- Write a one-page philosophy of church music to include with a job application.
- Write a series of church newsletter articles and/or bulletin notes relating to issues raised in this course.
- Prepare to lead an adult forum on a topic raised in this course, and lead it in your church.

All of these options will also include a presentation to the class.

## Outline

Session 1	Introduction to the course
Session 2	I. What is church music? A. What is music? B. Definition of church music i. Religious music and secular music ii. “Religious music,” “sacred music,” and “church music”
Session 3	II. Functions of church music A. No function: music as gift i. Church music as created ii. Church music as gift <b>Issue:</b> Applause iii. Church music as offering
Session 4	B. Liturgical functions i. Signaling ii. Covering actions <b>Issue:</b> Silence
Session 5	iii. Contributing to an atmosphere <b>Issue:</b> Music and character
Session 6	iv. Vehicle for dialog
Session 6	C. Communal functions i. Forming/expressing communal identity <b>Issue:</b> Memory <b>Issue:</b> Children and identity
Session 7	ii. Forming/expressing solidarity with other communities <b>Issue:</b> Ecumenism
Session 8	iii. Welcoming newcomers <b>Issue:</b> Catholicity
Session 8	iv. Enabling communal action <b>Issue:</b> Church music and social justice
Session 9	D. Textual functions i. Enhancing the meaning of texts ii. Enhancing the emotional impact of texts <b>Issue:</b> Church music and emotion Aiding in the retention of texts <b>Issue:</b> Judging texts
Session 10	iii. Adding to the solemnity of texts
Session 11	E. Communicative functions i. Proclaiming <b>Issue:</b> The church musician as preacher
Session 11	ii. Imparting an experience of transcendence <b>Issue:</b> Is church music sacramental?
Session 12	iii. Praying iv. Praising v. Lamenting

## Assignments

### **Assignment for session 2**

In one paragraph or less, define “church music.”

### **Assignment for session 3**

1. Try to think of something you would consider “church music” that is not included in the class’s working definition of “church music.” Try to think of something you would *not* consider “church music” that *is* included in the working definition. How would you alter the definition to take these examples into account?

2. In your own congregation, what are the three or four most important functions of church music? Why are they important?

### **Assignment for session 4**

Write a bulletin note, or a short newsletter article, regarding applause. Preferably, this should have reference to your own congregation.

### **Assignment for session 5**

1. For one service, list all of the musical signals that occur, and all of the times when music covers action.

2. For one service, time all the silences that occur (if you are a leader at the service, have someone else time them for you). What is the total amount of time? When do the longest silences occur?

### **Assignment for session 6**

Write a one-page statement explaining your views on the relation of music, emotion, and worship.

### **Assignment for session 7**

Think of two pieces of church music that you can sing from memory. Write a half page about each piece; discussing how you first learned it, when you have sung it, how it has formed your identity, and how it expresses your identity.

### **Assignment for session 8**

For two services, make a list of all the music that was used. Include the date, nationality, and denomination of origin of the text and music. What trends do you see? What are the reasons for this particular selection? How might this church’s music better reflect the global and temporal diversity of the Christian church?

### **Assignment for session 9**

List at least five ways in which music interacts with texts (see the Outline, II.D. in the Syllabus for examples, but try to think of other ways). For each way that you list, give a brief description and two examples.

### **Assignment for session 10**

Pick one piece of church music (instrumental or choral) based on a hymn tune. How has the composer enhanced the meaning of the text through the music? How has the composer enhanced the emotional impact of the text through the music?

### **Assignment for session 11**

Begin work on your final project (see details below). Decide which option you will use and brainstorm for ideas. In one page or less, describe your plan. You should continue working on the final project throughout the next year, even when your teacher or the assignments do not specify this.

## **Instructions for the Final Project** **(after completing Year Two)**

The final project will arise from your philosophy of church music, formed and refined by this course. This is intended to be a substantial piece of work, and you are expected to work on it throughout the second year of the course. This will not be your last word on the subject, but it should represent the best of your understanding at the present time.

There are a number of ways to complete this project. Some are listed below, and you are encouraged to find other options, in cooperation with your teacher.

1. Write a three-to-four-page philosophy of church music.

This will be an in-depth statement of what you believe about church music. Its primary purpose should be to show what church music is. Secondly, the paper should draw conclusions about church music practice.

Throughout, the paper should reflect responsibility – engaging the Bible, tradition, historic and contemporary thought, and other sources (including other courses in the LPM curriculum); consistency – avoiding contradictions among various parts of the philosophy; and subtlety – delving deeply into the subject and staying away from pat answers or mere polemics.

2. Write a one-page philosophy of church music to include with a job application.

This will be a short statement, which you might send along with a résumé and cover letter when applying for a church music position. Its primary focus should be on the practice of church music – giving the church an idea of how you might do things, but this must be based on a solid theory about what church music is. It should be no more than one page in length, and should be formatted engagingly.

Throughout, the statement should reflect responsibility, consistency, and subtlety as described above.

3. Write a series of church newsletter articles and/or bulletin notes relating to issues raised in this course.

This option will engage your congregation with what you have learned; it assumes that your church's newsletter and/or bulletin has enough space available for this purpose. These articles and/or notes should be primarily educational in nature, whether on general topics or specific issues. The project should include about one year of monthly newsletter articles or a comparable amount of bulletin notes; your teacher will make the final determination of how much is required. If possible, these should start to appear in your church's publications during the second year of the course.

Throughout, the articles and/or notes should reflect responsibility, consistency, and subtlety as described above.

4. Prepare to lead an adult forum on a topic raised in this course, and lead it in your church.

This option will also engage your congregation, in this case via face-to-face interaction. You should lead one or more sessions during your church's usual time for adult education. The topic(s) involved should be related to the material covered in this course. You should write a proposal for the forum, lead it during the second year of this course, and afterwards write a report describing how it went.

The forum, as well as the proposal and report, should reflect responsibility, consistency, and subtlety as described above.

5. Complete a project of your choice, which reflects a responsible, consistent, and subtle philosophy of church music, as described above.

In addition, you will be expected to present your final project to the class during the last sessions of this course. Your presentation should be about 10 minutes long, and may include lecture, discussion, multimedia, handouts, etc. Its goal is both to inform your classmates of the results of your project, and to show your ability to engagingly express your ideas.

## Session 1

### Introduction

This session is an introduction both to the entire LPM curriculum and to the philosophy of church music course. With whatever time is available for this course, the teacher should:

- hand out syllabi (pp. 7-13) to the students;
- briefly discuss the syllabus, and answer any questions the students have (the students will likely have questions about the final project, but try to spend as little time as possible on that topic at this point); and
- group the students into pairs (either by their choice or by the teacher's assignment); this partnership will last the duration of the course.

If there is more time available, the teacher is encouraged to initiate a discussion with the class. Possibilities include the following.

- Ask the students for questions they would like to have answered by the end of the class. Don't talk about answers yet. Write down the questions, and be sure to address them at some point in the course.
- Ask the students what "philosophy of church music" means to them, and what their expectations are for the course.
- Give the students two or three minutes to briefly summarize their current philosophy of music in writing. Have them refer back to these throughout the course, asking how their philosophies have changed.
- Bring up a controversial issue in church music, and ask the students how they would respond to it *philosophically*.
- Ask the students for any interesting or unexpected point of view that they encountered in their earlier classes that day; see if they can find an appropriate place in the course outline for it.
- Ask the students to share any past experiences they might have in writing or presenting on the philosophical side of church music.
- Read the class a provocative quotation regarding the philosophy of church music, and ask for their reactions.

### Assignment for session 2

In one paragraph or less, define "church music."