

Date of Hire: Saturday 1 December 2018

JOB SATISFACTION

What do you like most about your position as Church Musician at New Hope Lutheran Church? And/or what is most energizing?

The joy of working with others has evaporated during this period during the health crisis. It has put a damper on my creative expressions both as playing and composing. Ministering to a remote audience has derailed the celebratory nature of hymn playing to leading from afar. I've taken the opportunity, though, to utilize this as an opportunity to focus on the expressions of one individual composer and their expressions of musical art in their life. I believe this adds to the worship experience giving us a better more complete look at an individual or a time or a period.

I look forward to the time when I can work with others and utilize their skills and talents to the worship experience.

What is the most difficult or most challenging?

Leading a remote congregation is hard on the focus of a service without the contribution of others in the community uplift of voices. It has been very difficult to connect with others or to have feedback on what is working or not during a service – this leads to a feeling of isolation but plow ahead hoping that things are coming through.

ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS

Please provide a summary of your strengths. Is there a way we can make better use of your strengths?

I have attempted to have students which has been a dream of the Organist Guild as well, but it has not gone as hoped. It is still an emphasis for the future.

Tuning the entire organ this last cycle has been immensely helpful as well as the respect to the instrument the leadership has in maintaining the facility at consistent temperatures has kept things in high working order.

The purchase of the electronic keyboard added the ability for some new sounds especially the harpsichord and clavichord resources.

I also look forward to the resumption of the facility hosting community performing organizations and concerts. In addition, I hope the recital series at noon can begin again.

SUGGESTIONS

If you could change one thing about your experience at New Hope, what would it be and why?

The air conditioning system blowers are right by the organ in the loft. During the summer, it is difficult to hear even with the amplification. This past summer, running the conditioner full before the service and then turning it off has been helpful.

Hearing all the words from the front of the church has had a few times of difficulty. Maybe consider a monitor in the loft is a possible solution.

GOALS/ACTION PLAN

What is/are your work-related goal(s) for the upcoming year? How do you see these goals being accomplished, e.g., plan of action?

I look forward to the resumption of a soloist program as well as utilization of our musicians. Many of our guest musicians also look forward to the excitement of doing new materials that challenge them and are expressive to the congregation.

The lack of contact with others has affected my own writing and composition. I hope that will resume as soon as we exit this difficult time.

The elaboration of hymnody has been abandoned for the simplicity of the streaming. When musical leadership returns, I am confident we can return to the joy of those celebratory events and expressions.

I am excited about the new All Creation Sings addition to the current hymnbook. This addendum adds two more liturgical settings and 200 new hymns.

OTHER COMMENTS:

We need to examine the nature of contractual writing for guest musicians. There are other parts of the service music that needs codification. Though these are not a ready part of the current operation, we should have guidelines for weddings, funerals, guest organist, organ usage by others.

I miss the Lutheran Liturgical music that we have had to cut back from to accomplish successful streaming.

Having entered the realm of streaming/broadcast, I would like to see it develop further with support materials to the outreach congregation.

James F. Rickley

