

# Music Report – 2011

2011 was again another busy year for St. Mike's with the Music Ministry.

In January, St. Mike's was fortunate to welcome Rev. Michelle Eason as the full time rector. In response to this, a service was held to welcome her to the community. This service also included many special visitors from the Anglican community and the community at large, and consequently, the Choir prepared an anthem, "Tonn Leat" by Z. Randall Stroope, to add to Michelle's welcome and add a Gaelic musical blessing to the service. We were fortunate to have Chris Pelonzi, organist from St. Barnabas Anglican, as well as select McGill vocalists join us for this service to help with the music.

In January, a discussion among the Choir arose that had been on everyone's mind for quite some time – even as far back as to prior to my arrival at St. Michael's. As Easter was fast approaching, the Choir continued to discuss their thoughts on the current blue Choir gowns, and decided that they found them to be a bit dated. As a result, we began a discussion on going about getting new ones, and sure enough, we were able to order them from Gaspard Robes and on Easter Sunday, the Choir entered into the church in full procession wearing new, royal burgundy robes. The Choir looks fantastic in these new robes, which are also made of a lighter material that makes them much more comfortable than the previous ones.

In February, the Choir mourned the loss of one of its longtime members, Pat Hammond. Pat was a dynamic member of the Choir who was always supportive regardless of whatever task was at hand. I personally remember Pat as a woman of strong opinion and humour, and a woman very dedicated to her friends and family, as well as her faith. In the time I got to know her, Pat became a dear friend, and I speak on behalf of the Choir and myself when I say that she is sorely missed. In honour of Pat's life and her work with the Choir, the Choir sang a setting of "On Eagle's Wings" at Pat's memorial service. This celebration of her life was well attended and served to a testament of the life of faith she led surrounded by those whom she loved and who loved her.

In April, the Choir yet again provided the Easter season with four anthems that expressed the journey to Easter morning with both sorrow and rejoicing.

In June, the Praise Team said goodbye to a longtime member and their music leader, Melanie Hill. Mel decided after a number of years that she was being spiritually called to a new role. Mel has served the Praise Team for much longer than I have been at St. Mike's, both as a member and the Praise Team leader, and we thank her for her faithful ministry. Although we miss having her musical presence every week, we are thankful that she is still able to attend church on a regular basis in a new capacity. Since September, I have been leading Praise Team from the Piano, and am thankful to the hard work put in by all of the singers and instrumentalists that help make the music in the services uplifting, reflective and fun.

As usual, I was on vacation during the summer, and Dawn Boentemps, organist and wife of our own Georges Boentemps, was graciously able to serve the church as organist in my absence. I thank Dawn for her continued help to the Music Ministry at St. Mike's in leading worship through playing organ.

In September, the Choir returned and quickly went to work on working for another Christmas season. The Choir sang anthems and carols at both a Lessons and Carols service, as well as on Christmas Eve. The anthems reflected on the birth of Jesus, and varied from reflective journeys to ones filled with infectious grooves and jazz rhythms that made even me want to get up and dance! A bit hard to do, however, when you are playing the piano...

Throughout the year, the Choir has also sung at various Healing Services, using reflective music from the Taize community as a method of prayer. The Choir frequently explores new repertoire from the Taize community at these services. I encourage anyone interested in receiving healing prayer to attend one of these services in the upcoming year, as they are greatly fulfilling and incredibly moving.

The Choir also took the initiative to update their folders this past Fall, and invested in new hardcover black folders to be used while rehearsing and for singing in church.

A big thanks to Lynn Cloutier who works tirelessly (sometimes under short notice) to provide dynamic, informative PowerPoints that incorporate all of the music that we sing in each service. Many also do not know that Lynn also works tirelessly to file and organize music week by week for both Choir and the Praise Team – not an easy job with lots of songs every week! Her work is invaluable and I thank her for the steadfast commitment she provides to this ministry.

I continue to work with the Music and Liturgy Committee to provide music that is uplifting and spiritually fulfilling to each service. As spiritual music leaders, we attempt to provide a blend of music that incorporates traditional music into new music offered by Christian resources, including the most recent Anglican hymnal, Common Praise. It is my strong suggestion as time goes on that the congregation seriously considers a movement to investing in these new hymnals that will provide the church with a combination of both traditional and contemporary music moving into the coming years. This book has a great deal of beautiful hymns; some of which we sing on a regular basis, both in Praise and in traditional hymns. I always encourage anyone who is curious about music selection or church music in general to come speak with me.

I continue to encourage your input, and I look forward to a season of amazing music with the Choir, and to worshipping with you. Please continue to support our ministry in every way possible.

Blessings,  
Sean