

July 12, 2024

Friends,

Over the past several months John Alexander and I have met multiple times to discuss the transition in our music staff. Additionally, John has met with Anne Albert and Will Edwards to review the needs of our entire music ministry. John and I also met twice with the HR Committee, seeking to move forward prayerfully and thoughtfully.

After weighing carefully numerous options, the decision has been made, with the enthusiastic endorsement of the HR Committee, to move forward with the following changes:

- John will continue as the Director of Music and Principal Organist. In addition, he will conduct the Chancel Choir.
- We will create a part-time Assistant Organist position whose primary role will be the weekly accompaniment of the Chancel Choir in rehearsals and services.

This model will enable our excellent music program to continue while providing some needed redundancy and flexibility within the music department staff. The Assistant Organist will also be able to provide musical leadership for weddings, funerals, and occasions when John needs to be away on a Sunday. While there may be some shared service playing week to week (hymns and voluntaries), John will continue to hold the “Principal Organist” portion of his title and provide the bulk of the music.

We are eager for John to assume this role. While we are well aware of his gifts as an organist, John also has training and talents in choral conducting. Taking on the direction of Credo and Canticle Choirs has been one of his greatest joys in recent years, and he is looking forward to this new role with the Chancel Choir. Choral conducting was a large part of his studies at UNCG that culminated in a doctoral cognate in Choral Conducting. He served as Organist/ Choirmaster at a Presbyterian Church during his year at the Cleveland Institute of Music while specifically training for this type of role with Todd Wilson, a recognized leader in the organ and church music fields.

We will begin a search for an Assistant Organist immediately, with the hope that we can have this person in place as close to the beginning of the program year as possible. However, our goal is to hire the person God is calling to this role, regardless of timing. To that end a talented group of volunteers have agreed to help the staff with this search. We are thankful that Rhonda Youngdahl, Colbert Trotter, and Lane Ridenhour are willing to serve in this capacity. Their experience and wisdom will be invaluable in this important process.

I, the music staff, and the HR Committee all believe that returning to an Organist/ Choirmaster model offers new possibilities for our wonderful music program to excel. Thank you, as always, for your support and dedication to all the ministries of our congregation. We are richly blessed.

Grace and peace,

