

REPORT ON CHURCH MUSIC IN GENERAL IN OUR ELCSA (N-T) 2019

The purpose of our Music Ministry is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through song, encourage believers in their walk with Christ, lead the congregation in worship and provide an avenue through which individuals may share their gift and be an integral part of the praise and proclamation. Different music styles exhibit the richness of our services and congregational life in which the brass band, choir and worship team take part. It is a gift, a privilege and a joy-filled experience to be involved in this Ministry – it connects us to God and to one another!

It was most enlightening reading the feedback from congregations – thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. The detailed reports by the BRASS and CHOIR Associations (including 'All Lutheran Service 2017,') as well as the IMPACT Ministry are attached. The Festivals (Brass +Choir at ELCSA- and Circuit-level) are a highlight on the calendar for all musicians – this is a wonderful opportunity/experience for smaller choirs to enjoy the benefits of making music in a larger band/choir and also performing works that cannot be tackled at congregational level. It is indeed pleasing to note that Music in these three streams, is an important, vibrant and integral part of congregational life!

A Choir-conducting course, including a $\frac{1}{2}$ day seminar for organists, was offered for the first time in Pretoria (2019), which will be continued in April/May (2020) and will culminate for successful candidates to obtain the "D-Prüfung" certificate. In 2021 the next Brass Band – conducting course is planned. This ideal opportunity for candidates will help to equip them in their congregational work and especially in leading on Circuit level and beyond. It would be beneficial for us to look into creating a full-time Church Music Director post to lead the work in all fields (i.e. organists, choir, praise+worship) as well as interlinking with the Brass Association. This would go a long way in providing support and continuity in the music ministry in our synod.

The Southern Circuit Impact Ministry celebrated its Third Festival last year and it holds 1 or 2 workshops every year. The interest to grow the Contemporary style of worship is growing steadily in all circuits and the need for sharing music/resources/training materials on circuit-level has been expressed. Instrumental-, leader- and sound technician-training could be initiated by liaising with neighbouring congregations at circuit level. Encouragement, opportunities to play an instrument/lead a group and initial simple repertoire are important ingredients to strengthen this work within congregations, thereby developing talent and giving God the Glory.

Let us strive to fulfil God's purpose in creating the gift of music, namely to promote the Gospel, to connect us to God in unique ways, allowing us to express our love to God with our whole being and as worship, bringing to fruition what HE commanded us to do, namely to ".....make music to the Lord with the harp and with the sound of singing." Ps. 98:5. Music connects individuals and unifies the congregation - it heals the rifts, gives hope and a sense of belonging to the Body of Christ.

Luther said: "The gift of language combined with the gift of song was only given to man to let him know that he should praise God with both word and music, namely, by proclaiming [the Word of God] through music."

Connie Ortmann

Church Music