



# Follen Music Program Guidance

**2022**



# Format for Today's Meeting



- We will share sections of the guidance document.
- Please put your questions in the chat as we go along.
- We will address a few questions after each section.
- We will then take more questions—verbally and from the chat—at the end.



# The MPSC Charge



- Vision Statement - Where will Follen's music program be in the future?
- Mission Statement - What are the goal(s) of Follen's music program?
- Core Values - A list of values that define how Follen pursues the mission of the music program
- Program Charter - The specific responsibilities and authority of the individuals and groups that contribute to, support, and govern the music program



# Listening and Learning



- Document review
  - Old surveys, history of the program, 2020 listening sessions
- Listening sessions
  - 14 listening sessions completed with over 90 participants
  - Staff focus groups and individual interviews for key staff
- Music survey
  - Music survey closed with 185 respondents



# Follen Music Program Guidance



- Vision and Mission
- Core values
  - Core values of the music program to keep in mind when making decisions about music
- How We Make Music Together
  - Description of the varied musical opportunities for adults, youth and children
  - Expectation of an annual musical event with process for selection
  - Recommendation on how to share music with the wider community
- Governance
  - Creation of a lay-leadership Music Team as a sub-committee of WMAT
  - Description of relationships between WMAT, Music Team, MD, Director of RE, and Minister
  - Music Team Charter
- Other Recommendations
  - Summarizes other important learnings from listening sessions and survey that search committee should consider



# Coming up with a Vision and Mission

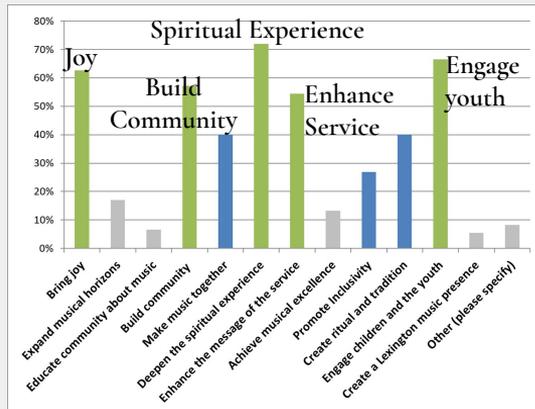


## Listening Sessions

**What is the purpose of music at Follen?**

- I love to hear the collective voice in the sanctuary.
- The most important thing about the program and how it might transform is that it enhances the message of the service.
- For Sunday, it is important that the music is spiritual - can be contemporary or classical.
- Singing is a huge glue for the congregation.
- As a community committed to anti-racism, I want to hear music that embodies inclusion and antiracism without slipping into cultural appropriation.
- The most important music thing is its place in worship. The big ideas of life.
- Joy, beauty, and hard work make an amazing music program.
- I've loved in recent years when the music made connections with the kids and social justice issues.
- Singing is my mode of prayer.
- Why do I go to church? Because I want to have a spiritual experience - so whatever music deepens the sermon of that day makes me want to go inside of myself to examine how I'm being worshipful.
- I would love to see music as more than just choir and the choral tradition.
- The main thrust is when I go to the service, it is a spiritual experience. The music should enhance that and not be a distraction.
- It's helpful to think of music vs community-building vs the service so the service doesn't have to have everything.
- There's something magical about starting a service with a familiar tune/processional and a robed choir and organ. That experience is deep inside of me.

Survey Questions

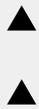


## Vision

....spiritual experience....all ages....joy of making music together....inclusive community

## Mission

- Music Minister
- Enhance the worship services and support the sermon's message
- Expand awareness
- Inclusive, LGBTQ+ welcoming, and intentionally anti-racist congregation.
- Fellowship, participation for all ages.



# Vision Statement



*Follen believes in the transcendent power of music.*

*Our music program deepens our individual and collective spiritual experience, engaging congregants of all ages in the fellowship and joy of making music together. Through music we build and bind our inclusive community, care for each other, and work for justice.*

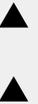


# Mission Statement



The mission of the Music Program is to:

- Minister to the Follen community through music.
- Enhance the worship services and support the sermon's message with meaningful music that speaks to the soul and our shared Unitarian Universalist values.
- Explore how music can expand awareness and embody Follen's commitment to being an inclusive, LGBTQ+ welcoming, and intentionally anti-racist congregation.
- Provide opportunities for musical growth, fellowship, and participation for all ages.





# Core Values



# What kind of music do we want at Follen?

I've liked the emphasis on congregational singing with the choir (welcoming and inclusive) and a **broadening of the repertoire.**

There is a challenge with traditions - **how do new traditions evolve**, how do we honor old traditions, what do we need to do to avoid cultural appropriation?

I hope we will feature the **beautiful organ** prominently in our musical life.

Providing what the congregation wants, **challenging the congregation** when it should be challenged and pushing the congregation into places they didn't know where we needed to go.

More **instrumental guests.**  
Stick pounding.

Explanations help you understand what the music is doing or what is behind it. Then it is easier to accept music we don't like.

I want choir singing and communal singing.

Music can be joyous, playful, funny, moving - but **it shouldn't be boring.**

I loved how Vivian pushed boundaries with **different types of music.**

I want **outstanding music** of all genres and periods.

We need to have a good range of music **balancing** the familiar hymns/songs that have a deep root in the community with exposure to new things.

I hate the teal hymnal.

I love the teal hymnal. I'd like to see it more.

You'll have to accept the discomfort.

I like **many genres**, but want them all to be done with respect and love for the music and the congregation.

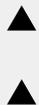
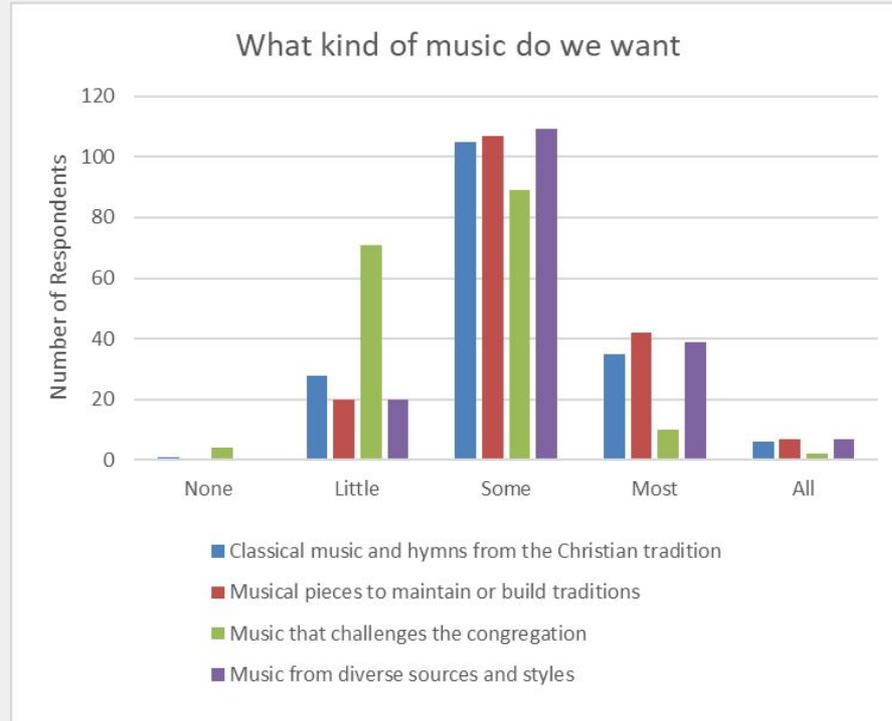
A good music director can make a song grow on you with communication.

I'm concerned about cultural appropriation; if we're using music from other cultures, we must acknowledge who created it. Have those people help us be **responsible consumers** of that music.

# Choice of Music - What Did We Hear?



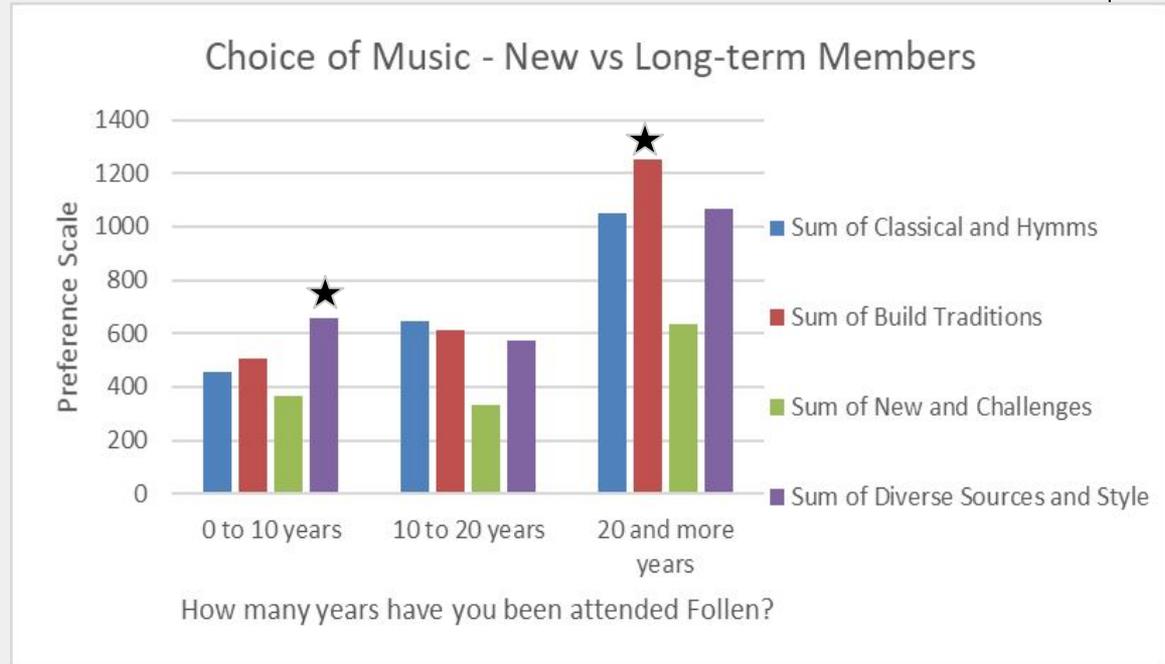
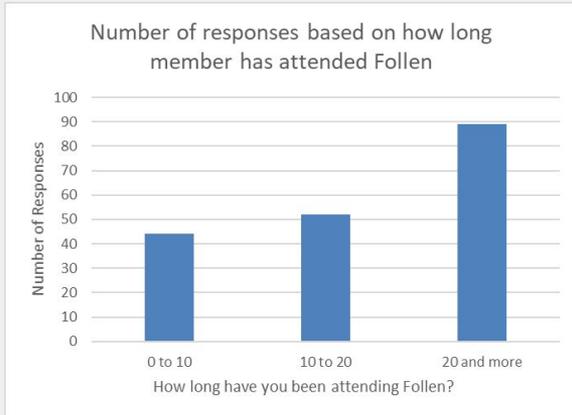
- The Follen community wants diverse music but not too much music that is challenging or pushes out of our comfort zone.
- Diverse music inherently means that not everyone will always like the music selected. And we need to be OK with that.
- The importance of being aware of cultural appropriation was brought up in multiple listening sessions.



# Choice of Music - Newer vs Long-term Members



- Long-term members prefer having more traditional music
- Newer members prefer music from a diverse sources and styles



# Core Values of the Follen Music Program



- Music at Follen draws from a **diverse range of genres and sources**, providing all with a connection to the familiar as well as exposure to the new.
- Music is integral to **creating ritual and tradition for the Follen community**. Care should be taken to maintain traditions, and they should be revisited and revised regularly.
- The music program helps us live out Follen's commitment to being an **inclusive, LGBTQ+ welcoming, and intentionally anti-racist congregation** by lifting up diverse and under-represented voices while being conscious and careful about cultural appropriation.
- Music at Follen welcomes the congregation as **worshippers, listeners, and active participants** in meaningful music making.
- The Follen community values the professional expertise of the Music Director and commits to upholding our **Covenant of Right Relations** in building a relationship together.





# Governance



# The MPSC Charge



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# How should decisions be made?

There has to be room for **flexibility**, growth, change.

The Music Director is a professional and needs to be **respected for their expertise**.

People need to hear you, be heard by you, and respected. The Music Director needs to **communicate** with the congregation and work to **build the trust** of the community.

Noisy or pushy individuals shouldn't be allowed to undermine the **community agreements**.

We should be careful of too many cooks in the kitchen, but we must have **opportunities for feedback** when needed.

The Music Director should be aware that **traditions need to be changed carefully**; that some traditions serve the purpose of sustaining community beyond the time of the current Music Director.

A congregational oversight group should be the **curator and caretaker of this vision** that we are creating right now. They hold that vision and try to uphold it.

There was not enough **communication** in the past. We need to make people feel included in the program.

I'm more interested in having that **trust** than seeing how decisions are made.

It's very tough to get this right. **More transparency is needed**. Find a good balance.

There should be a **music team** or committee that specifically is there to offer counsel, support, feedback and act as a sounding board for the director of music.

**No one has a mandate** - they have to cultivate trust and community.

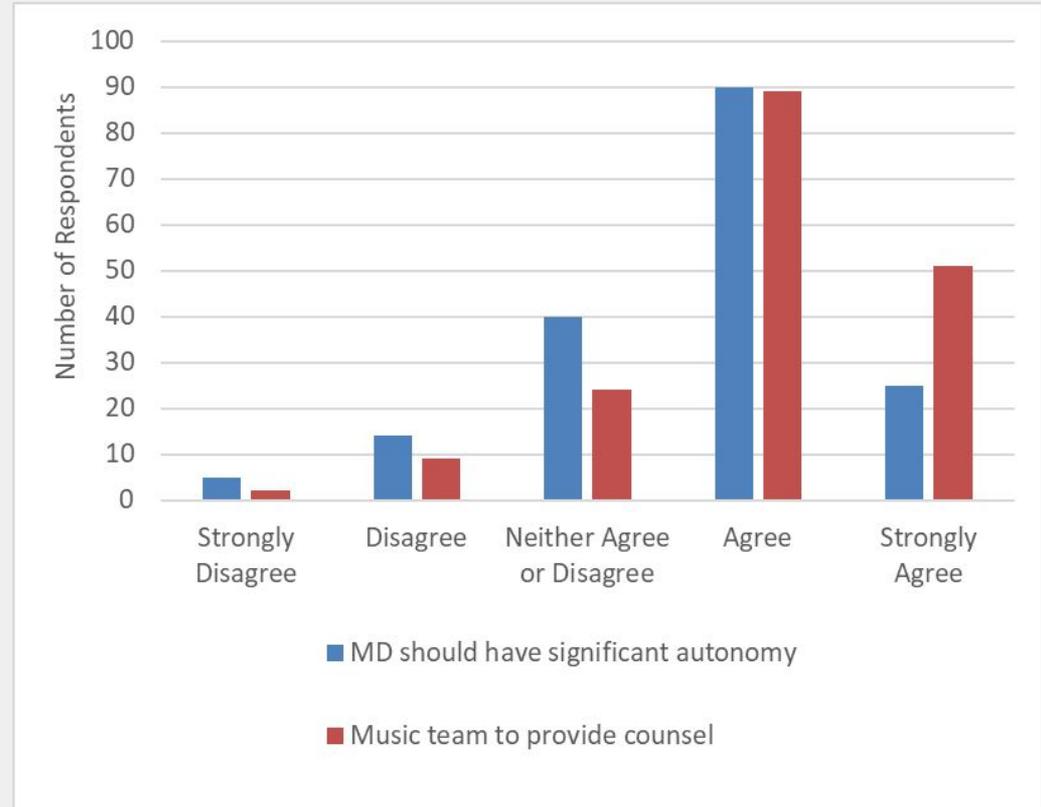
Above all, there has to be harmony. When there ceases to be harmony, no matter how much talent a person has, it won't help the church. The director can have a free hand as long as it doesn't upset people in the church.

**Not micromanagement**, but have a music director who is curious about how it is going.

The Music Director and Minister need a **shared vision**. WMAT gets to pass thoughts from congregation to them about music.

# What did we hear?

- Many participants in listening sessions identified the need for a dedicated music team to provide guidance and support for the Music Director.
- In the survey, Follen members agreed that the music directors should have "significant autonomy," and even more agreed that a Music Team should provide counsel to the Music Director.



# Governance



The Worship and Music Action Team (WMAT) collaborates with the Minister, Music Director, and Director of Religious Education to shape worship services. See Worship and Music Action Team Charter.

- With the support of WMAT, the **Music Director collaborates with the Minister** to support the worship experience with music that deepens the spiritual connection and enhances the message of the service.
- The Music Director collaborates with the Minister and Director of Religious Education to **generate meaningful experiences that engage children and youth**.
- The Minister has the ultimate authority over worship while respecting the professional experience of the Music Director.

To support and steward the Follen Music Program, there shall be a **lay-leadership Music Team, a sub-committee of WMAT**, that provides counsel, support, and feedback for the Music Director.



# Music Team

## Support the Follen Music Program

Stewards of our Music Vision

Uphold commitment to inclusivity

Curate traditions

## Support & Advise the Music Director

Advise on program choices

Share feedback

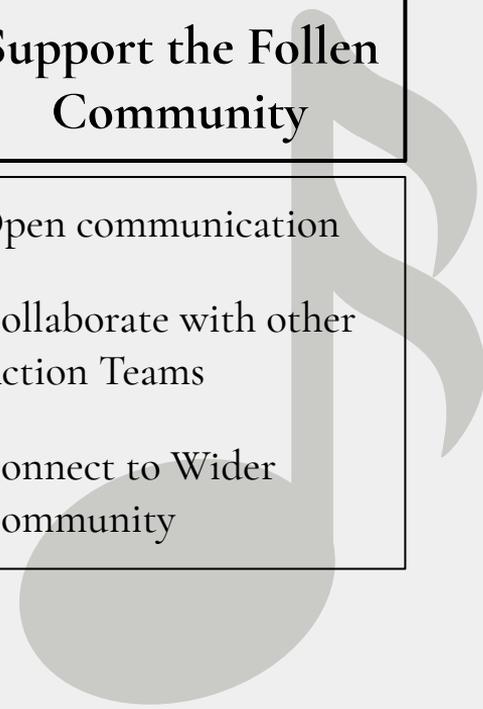
Organ fund and other budget decisions

## Support the Follen Community

Open communication

Collaborate with other Action Teams

Connect to Wider Community





# Annual Musical Production/ Event



# How do we feel about the Operetta?

I loved seeing all the **kids working together**.

There should have been ways for **any kid who wanted to be in** it, to be in it.

Those performances with the kids thundering their feet on the stage, it moves me to tears even now.

Some have loved it and it is their main focus, and others can't participate because of conflict or were bothered by the gender roles and limited range that the operetta represented.

A good leader could conceive of **something new**.

It was magical because it wasn't about being the best but instead about **building community**.

**Inclusivity is key.**

When you get to be in junior choir, there is nothing more exciting than to see the seniors singing away and thinking "I want to attain that."

I think we have to acknowledge the **problems with the content**.

Gilbert & Sullivan does not reflect **our values**.

Some people object to G and S because it's so dated; I think it could be a good history lesson. Was always purposefully overdone and laughed at.

Presenting something with content we don't agree with because we've always done it makes me uncomfortable.

It was **precious as a community builder** - a chance to love everyone's kid as if they were your own.

I've been struck by how much **the kids love tradition**. Kids get attached to things like that, it feels like home.

The children who couldn't shine elsewhere could shine there.

What's important is a big culminating event that **involves everyone who wants to participate** that is challenging and complex and rewarding and meaningful.

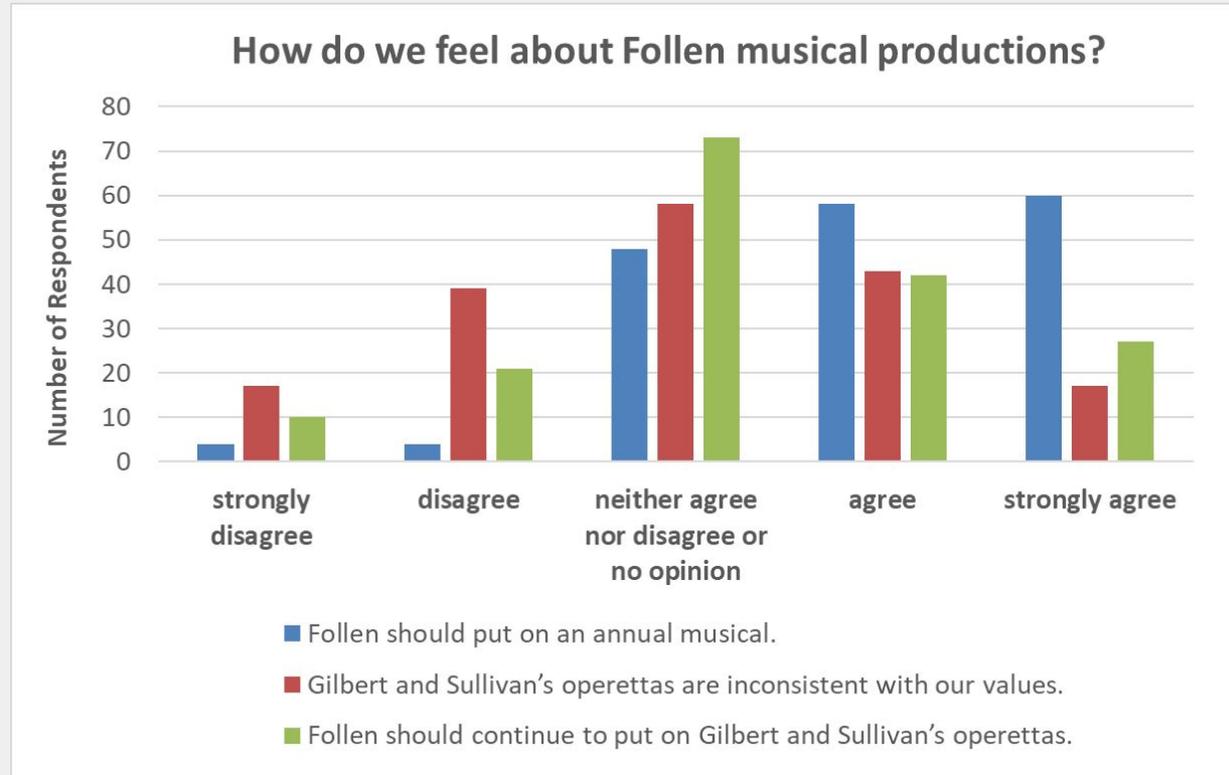
Gilbert & Sullivan is also a great teaching experience to understand satire and to play around with it. **I'm thinking differently about it now after hearing people share.**

I'm less morally offended by G & S than I am by some of the hymns we sing. It's ok because that's how culture rolls. G & S is ok because every character is satirized.

# Operetta - What Did We Hear?

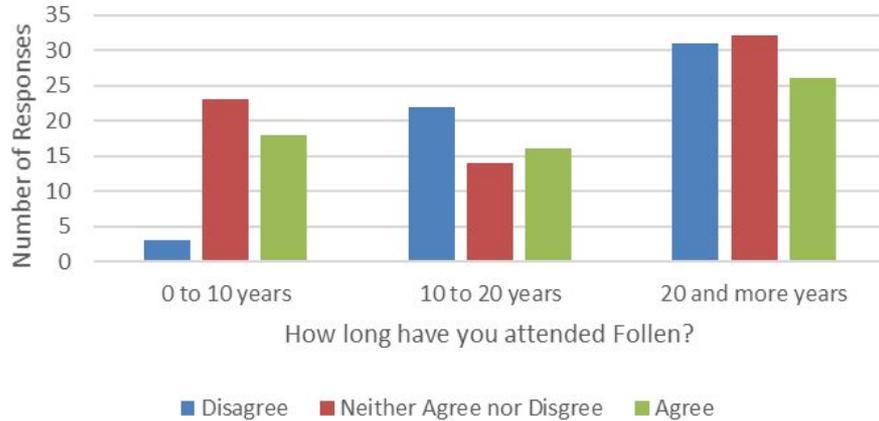


- The Follen community supports an annual musical that builds community, highlights our youth, and includes all who are able to participate.
- The Follen community is not of one mind regarding the appropriateness of Gilbert and Sullivan.



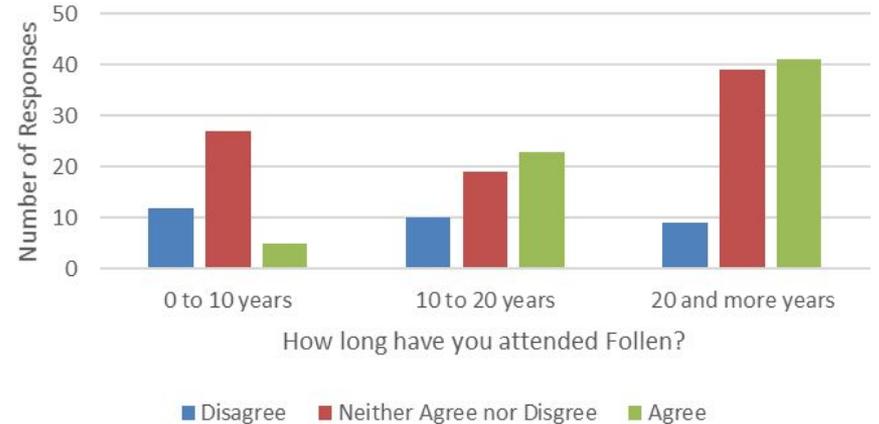
# Operettas - Newer vs. Long-term Members

Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas are inconsistent with our values.



Newer members are less likely to agree that the Operettas are consistent with our values.

Follen should continue to put on Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas.



A majority of members, and especially new members, do not feel strongly about continuing to put on Gilbert and Sullivan operettas.



# How has another congregation grown their repertoire?

2018 – Shrek! The Musical

2012 – The Sound of Music

2017 – The Gondoliers

2011 – Pirates of Penzance

2016 – The Magic Flute

2010 – The Music Man

2015 – The Wizard of Oz

2009 – Godspell

2014 – Bye Bye Birdie

2008 – H.M.S. Pinafore

2013 – The Mikado

# Annual Music Production/Event



The Follen Music Program sponsors an annual **community-wide musical event supported by lay volunteers**. The event **showcases youth**, provides opportunities for all to participate **regardless of musical ability**, and **builds community** through shared experience. **The Music Director, in collaboration with the Music Team**, has the responsibility and authority to choose each year's community production/event, which **may continue** Follen's tradition of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and/or draw from new sources. The Music Director, Music Team, and participants will devote time to **reflecting on the content** of their production and its impact on others.





Thank You

