

Follen Music Program Guidance

January 2022

Vision

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This Follen Music Program Guidance Document was prepared by the Music Program Steering Committee during the 2021-2022 church year. The Committee held fourteen Listening Sessions, conducted several interviews, and administered a congregation-wide survey in order to create a Vision, Mission, and Core Values Statement for the Follen Music Program in addition to writing a Charter for a new Music Team. The Music Program Steering Committee included David Jacobson, Ching Lai, Maureen Markelz, and Jennifer Vandiver.

Vision

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

The mission of the Follen 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 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.

How We Make Music Together

A thriving Music Program engages adults, youth, and children with opportunities to make music. Follen Music Program offerings should be open to all and provide opportunities for varying degrees of commitment. The Follen Music Program currently includes, but is not limited to the following opportunities:

- *Adult Choir* - Consisting of Follen members who can make a regular time commitment, the Adult Choir creates high-quality music together for Sunday Worship Services. The adult choir may utilize paid soloists on an as-needed basis.
- *Youth and Children's Choirs* - These choirs provide children & youth, regardless of musical ability, the opportunity to celebrate the joy of making music together. Traditionally divided into Children (1st-5th Grades) and Youth (6th-12th Grades), all efforts should be made to lower barriers of participation so all feel welcome.

- *No Name Choir* - With a lighter time commitment and no expertise required, this choir offers the community ways to enjoy making music together several times a year.
- *Sharing the Gifts of Lay Musicians* - The Follen community is blessed with many talented musicians. The Follen Music Program highlights these gifts by inviting guest soloists and performances.
- *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.

Sharing Music with the Wider Community

The Follen Music Program's new music spaces provide opportunities to experience high-quality music created by both our own musicians and others. As time and energy allow, the Music Team can explore how to use Follen's Music Program to invite connection to the wider musical community.

- The Music Team is responsible for reviewing any public musical performances sponsored by Follen. While the Music Director's involvement is welcomed and encouraged, the Music Team recognizes that the Music Director must prioritize core worship responsibilities. The Minister and Music Director should be consulted as needed or when questions arise.
- The Music Team is encouraged to partner with other Action Teams to enable musical performances and events that address community needs and goals and embody our work for social justice.
- The Music Team is encouraged to search out opportunities for interfaith collaboration.

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 Charter

Team Responsibilities

- *Support the Follen Music Program*
 - Support and promote music programming for all of Follen - mindful of the diverse ages, interests, and abilities of our community including but not limited to choirs, performances, and productions.
 - Uphold Follen's commitment to being an intentionally and proactively inclusive, LGBTQ+ welcoming, and intentionally anti-racist congregation.
 - Curate and reflect upon Follen's music traditions, honoring our history while ensuring their relevance.
- *Support and Advise the Music Director*
 - Advise the Music Director on program choices that support the Music Program's mission and our shared Unitarian Universalist values.
 - Convey needs and concerns of the Follen community to the Music Director.
 - Support the Music Director in making staffing and budget decisions concerning the music program. In communication with Follen's trustees, oversee the expenditures associated with the Louise Curtis Fund and the Stoneham Organ Fund.
- *Support the Follen Community*
 - Promote and maintain open communication between the Follen community and the Music Director.
 - Act as a resource and point of connection for the congregation with respect to Follen music programming.
 - Reach out and collaborate with other action teams, such as coordinating with Religious Education Action Team, to ensure programming is available to all who wish to participate.
 - Develop and coordinate opportunities for musical outreach with the wider community.

Membership

Members of the Music Team shall be Members or Friends of Follen Church initially selected by WMAT.

- The Music Director is an ex-officio member of the Music Team.
- The Music Team should have no fewer than five members.
- The composition of the Music Team should reflect the diverse demographic of the entire congregation. Efforts should be made to include members who represent those participating in various music program offerings and the wider community.
- The Music Team should be led by a Chair, approved by WMAT, who acts as a liaison to WMAT.

Responsibilities of Members

- Attend and participate in Music Team meetings and share responsibility for specific tasks.
- Work to achieve consensus in decision making, respecting the musical expertise of the Music Director.
- Collaborate with the Music Director to organize, staff, and support Follen Music Program activities.
- Attend to leadership development and periodic chair succession.

Additional Recommendations

In addition to the Follen Music Program Guidance, the Music Programming Steering Committee encourages the Search Committee to consider the following in their creation of a job description and selection of a new Music Director.

- Many people during listening sessions noted that Follen would benefit from separate adult and children music directors because of the different needs and skill sets of those roles. The best configuration will need to be determined by the strengths and preferences of the chosen candidate. The MPSC recommends an Assistant Director with hours per week determined by required responsibilities and budget. The Music Director can choose how to use the assistant's time i.e. children's choir director, shared choir rehearsals, coordinate events, etc.
- A repeated theme heard from Follenites was the need to consider a candidate's ability to minister to and connect with the community as much as their musical abilities. A job description should emphasize interpersonal skills and a desire to build connection with the Follen community.
- Communication and explanation of the music in service can help connect people to the music, bridge gaps, and enhance the spiritual experience. Many Follenites in Listening Sessions and the Survey spoke to their appreciation of learning more about the background of musical pieces.
- The Music Director benefits from having a musical presence outside of Follen, connecting them to the broader musical community. The job description should be clear that outside musical commitments are acceptable and even encouraged, but there are some Follen events/meetings that the Music Director must attend.
- The Music Director should create a process for the music staff (soloists, accompanists, etc.) to provide regular feedback to the music program to ensure they feel respected, trusted and have a voice in the musical vision of the church.
- The Parish Board should revisit this Follen Music Program Guidance Document to ensure it is achieving its goals once a new Music Director is established in the next few years.