



Called to Be a Living Voice—a draft

Lutheran church musicians are called to lead the church's song. We serve as organists, choir directors, instrumental leaders, song leaders, and in a diversity of other leadership roles. In the Lutheran tradition we are known as cantors and are responsible for the care of the church's music. Since its founding in 1985, the ALCM has seen a tremendous creative flux in the music being used in our members' congregations. As a professional organization for Lutheran church musicians, the ALCM is called to serve its members at this time by providing the support, learning, networking, grounding, excitement, inspiration, and celebration to carry us into the future.

Lutheran church musicians use a diversity of musical language to proclaim the unifying gospel. In the various roles we find ourselves, we are open to the wide array of musical expressions now available to us. We are rooted and guided by western catholic musical and liturgical traditions. We are responsive to the contexts and cultures in which we find ourselves. We simultaneously care for our congregations' local musical heritage and tradition while being bridge builders to the ever-emerging new songs of the church. We delight in the riches from our past but we also use music from the present. We respond to the patterns of globalization that have brought nations and cultures closer together and have introduced music from all over the world in our worship. In short, we have a love of the past, a passion for the present, and a burning excitement for the future.

North American Lutheran churches use a full range of church musicians as leaders. While about a quarter of us are employed in full-time positions, the overwhelming majority of us are employed in part-time positions. Some of us are called as volunteers, often in churches that cannot afford to hire a musician. All of us are called to do the most excellent kind of music that we can and to best utilize the resources that are available to us.

Lutheran church musicians focus on developing and celebrating the gifts of all of God's people in their worship. We celebrate the fact that the Lutheran church is a singing church, and we work to keep and enlarge this singing tradition. We recognize that the entire congregation is the most important musical performer in our worship. The call to be a volunteer has been a fundamental characteristic of our church music programs. Our choirs, handbell ensembles, and instrumental groups are largely made up of people who have answered this call and they are the people who make possible all the music that enriches our worship assemblies.

Lutheran church musicians recognize the importance of theological and musical integrity in their music. We have a burning desire to proclaim God's Word, Jesus Christ, through music and worship. Our church began as a confessing theological movement in the church catholic, and the importance of our beliefs remains paramount as they are expressed in our music.

Lutheran church musicians bring passion and creativity to challenges and change

We respond to changes in North American culture by creatively finding new ways to involve children and youth in choirs and instrumental ensembles at a time when they are often overextended in their commitments. We also creatively respond to the present decline in membership of mainline Christian churches and the impact that has had on resources and volunteerism. We try to ensure that whatever music is performed in our churches is true to the theological and musical integrity of our heritage.

Lutheran church musicians are part of a vibrant and living tradition, and recognize that anything that is living is always growing and changing.

We foster creativity in all its forms, but especially in new musical expressions for the church. We are part of an ever-unfolding vocation. As the song of the church changes from century to century, we, the leaders of this song, remain committed to the joyful task of bringing the church's song into our assemblies to proclaim God's Word in our midst.