

# The Future of Music at Foundry

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## A Report of the Issues Working Group on Music Ministry of Foundry United Methodist Church Washington, D.C.

March 19, 2008

### Executive Summary

The departure of Dr. Guenther has been a significant and challenging time for Foundry. It is generally recognized that her leadership was responsible for bringing both the quality and the spirituality of the music at Foundry to great heights. In the wake of her departure, Foundry must now determine what its Music Ministry should look like for the future. The charter of the Issues Working Group (IWG) formed in August 2007 was to (1) identify elements of the existing music program to be carried forward, (2) study elements of our music program that might be changed, added to, or enhanced, and (3) recommend responsibilities and competencies to list as part of the position description for the new Minister of Music. An interim music program committee secured interim music leadership through June 2008, by when a permanent replacement is anticipated to be hired. Church leadership anticipates that the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), supplemented perhaps by an *ad hoc* search committee, will be responsible for implementing any IWG-recommended staffing solutions.

The IWG process was to involve significant research, outreach, and analysis. The IWG began by gathering information to evaluate all aspects of our music program and identify opportunities for change and improvement. This entailed documenting current operations, conducting a congregation-wide survey, and performing significant additional outreach. The IWG also researched the practices of peer congregations. The IWG was tasked with delivery of a written report with associated material. This is the report.

The IWG confirmed that Foundry's music program typically delivers excellent presentation, a variety of forms and artists, music that is meaningful and an abundance of musical offerings and opportunities for participation. These themes consistently emerged as the IWG collected information from multiple sources. Accordingly, the most fundamental recommendation of the IWG is to "**Continue The Tradition.**" The IWG strongly urges continuing with all of the current core elements of the Foundry Music Program: excellence, variety, authenticity, and abundance, without significant departures from our existing tradition. As a practical matter, this recommendation translates into a mandate for taking up changes to the structure and program elements with caution. As discussed below, however, some incremental programmatic changes are probably prudent. The new music staff and pastorate should be charged with executing those changes.

The IWG also makes below some more prescriptive recommendations, namely, that Foundry should:

**Re-examine 9:30 Service Music Program.** The survey results, outreach efforts and other information all indicate the 9:30 Music (and worship service itself) are

areas for potential growth and also the one program area that probably needs adjustment. More resources need to be consistently devoted to its musical leadership and musical offerings probably need to be broadened.

**Increase Congregational Participation.** A broad congregational desire exists for increased participation in music.

**Improve Diversity of Forms.** Although the current program offers a variety there seems to be a desire for more.

**Improve Focus on Youth and Children.** Foundry is currently enjoying a growth in attendance of families with young children. Our musical programs for children and youth could probably draw more participants with the addition of more resources and energy.

The ultimate product of the IWG was to be a listing of “responsibilities and competencies to list as part of the position description for the new Minister of Music.” These responsibilities and competencies are discussed below and a draft “position description” for the SPRC to incorporate into its search efforts for a new Music Staff is included. *However*, the IWG strongly suggests that SPRC re-examine any presupposition that Foundry needs to (or can) satisfy its staffing needs by recruiting a *single* full time Director or Minister of Music. The idea that this position could continue to fulfill all our staff needs (in addition to paid soloists/section leaders and occasional substitutes) may not be correct. For this reason, the IWG submits that the proposed “position description” may merely serve as guidance for seeking to fill possibly several positions of varying full time equivalency, rather than a prescription for a search effort for a single employee. And, the report provides a number of staffing scenarios that SPRC should consider once it has tested the market for a lead position.

No matter how SPRC chooses to staff the functions, it should be prepared to spend more money (both in absolute dollars and as a percentage of our operating budget) on salaries or contract talent than we have done in the past. Based on the objective data obtained from peer congregations, comparison of historical salaries with prevailing market rates, and the IWG’s own analysis, Foundry should expect to have to spend more to fulfill its music staff needs. As indicated below, these additional expenditures may take the form of increased salary for a principal leader/Music Director or creation of new paid part time or permanent contract staff such as an assistant director or an organist/accompanist. And, the SPRC will need to define very specifically and carefully, once it proceeds to negotiations with a candidate principal musical leader, what it will permit in terms of outside commitments and define the time and focus that will be required for Foundry.

Music Issues Working Group:

Todd Mullins (Chair)

Scott Calvert (Drafting Team Lead)

Cheryl Gibbs (Outreach Team Lead)

Emily Sama Martin (Survey Team Lead)

Anna C. Alt-White

Adam Hall

Charlotte Knapp

Bill McLeod

Gavin Palmer

Frances Prince