



FREE WEBINAR

# Church Music in the Age of COVID

Wednesday, May 27, 1pm Eastern



## Welcome!

- **To ask presenters a question**, you will type that in the Q and A box.
- Chat will be open for this webinar. Click on the chat box and make sure to select **“chat to all panelists and attendees”** from the dropdown menu. Go ahead and say who you are and where you’re from now!
- **You will receive a recording of the webinar.** It will include a scrollable chat box.

This webinar is produced by PRC – Practical Resources for Churches



[www.prcli.org](http://www.prcli.org)

## About PRC

PRC is a non-profit denominational resource center offering consultants, workshops, webinars, and resources to congregations.

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# Church Music in the Age of COVID

Emily Floyd and David Gambrell, May 27, 2020



# Why Do We Sing in Worship?

“Sing to the Lord,  
who has triumphed  
gloriously!”

Exodus 15:21



Chludov Psalter, 9th Century

# Why Do We Sing in Worship?

TO GLORIFY—*and enjoy!*—GOD

(Westminster Catechism, Q1)

- to establish sacred space and time
- to convey what words alone cannot express
- to build community, connect as body of Christ
- to inspire action, service in daily life

# Are There Other Ways ...

TO GLORIFY—*and enjoy!*—GOD?

(Westminster Catechism, Q1)

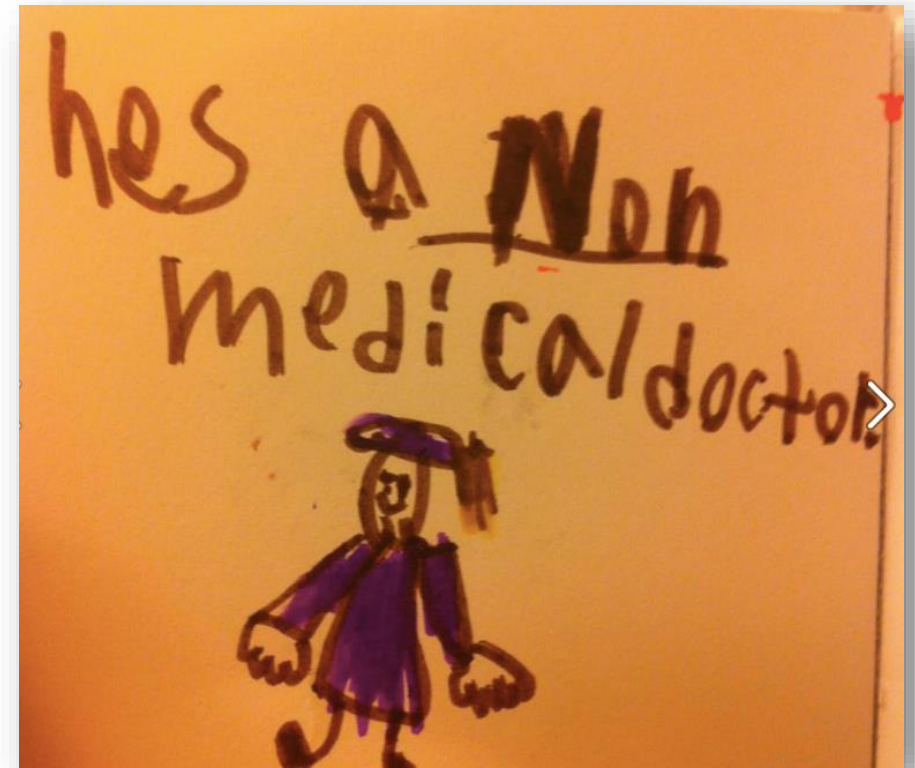
- to establish sacred space and time?
- to convey what words alone cannot express?
- to build community, connect as body of Christ?
- to inspire action, service in daily life?



# What Science Says about Singing

## NOT medical or legal advice

- follow medical professionals
- consult legal authorities
- consider local conditions
- track latest developments



# What Science Says about Singing

Online Panel on May 5, 2020: “What Do Science and Data Say About the Near-Term Future of Singing?”



National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS),  
American Choral Directors Academy (ACDA),  
Chorus America, Barbershop Harmony Society,  
Performing Arts Medical Association (PAMA)

**Dr. Donald Milton**, Professor of Environmental Health,  
University of Maryland; expert on infectious bioaerosols,  
exhaled breath analysis, and respiratory epidemiology

**Dr. Lucinda Halstead**, Founder and Director of Institute  
for Voice and Swallowing, Medical University of South  
Carolina and President-Elect of PAMA; otolaryngologist



# What Science Says about Singing

“NATS Panel of Experts Lays Out Sobering Future for Singers,” Zach Finkelstein, [middleclassartist.com](http://middleclassartist.com)

“When Can We Sing?” Rev. Nola Reed Knouse, Ph.D., Nola’s Notes (YouTube), Moravian Music Foundation

“Singing, the Church, and Covid-19,” Heather R. Nelson, Ph.D., [drheathernelson.com](http://drheathernelson.com)

# What Science Says about Singing

## THE BAD NEWS ...

Currently, there is **no safe way** for singers to rehearse together or sing together until there is a **widely available vaccine** and a 95% effective **treatment protocol**.

# What Science Says about Singing

**Why? Three reasons ...**

- 1) There is no spacing solution that would eliminate risk.
  - aerosolized virus, micron level
  - distances required, ventilation

# What Science Says about Singing

## Why? Three reasons ...

- 1) There is no spacing solution that would eliminate risk.
- 2) There are no masks (even N-95) that are safe for singing.
  - specialized fit required for clinical use
  - difficult to breathe, dangerous for some
  - study: even speaking with mask transmits flu

# What Science Says about Singing

## Why? Three reasons ...

- 1) There is no spacing solution that would eliminate risk.
- 2) There are no masks (even N-95) that are safe for singing.
- 3) Tests for Covid-19 are not yet fast or accurate enough.
  - current standard tests have 3–5% false negative results
  - transmission can occur before symptoms appear



# What Science Says about Singing

## Many Outbreaks Have Started in Churches

- Rural Arkansas (CDC study)
- Several Locations, California
- Cleburne County, Colorado
- Several Locations, Kansas
- Skagit County, Washington
- Frankfurt, Germany

# What Science Says about Singing

**But what about ...**

... wind instruments?

... humming?

... speaking?

... outdoor services?

... surfaces/objects?

# What Science Says about Singing

## Evaluation, Acceptance, and Management of Risk

- follow medical professionals
- consult legal authorities
- consider local conditions
- track latest developments

# What Science Says about Singing

## Hope on the Horizon?

Development of effective, widely available vaccine

*18–24 months*

Development of 95% effective drug treatments

*6–12 months*

Limiting spread through public health measures

*distancing, masks and gloves, hand washing, contact tracing*

Technical countermeasures to reduce risk

*ventilation, filters, booths, barriers*

# What Science Says about Singing

## Hope on the Horizon?

A lesson from the psalms:

### **Learn to lament**

- a faithful—*and musical*—response
- a solitary song, yet in solidarity
- a pathway to hope and praise



# **Church Music in the Time of COVID**

**Emily Floyd**

**[efloyd@shallowford.org](mailto:efloyd@shallowford.org)**

# TOPICS

**Worship**

**Choir**

**Congregational Song**

**Ministry**

# COVID-19 CHALLENGE

## **CHOIR**

**Without music,  
what is a choir?**

**and performing – there will be no choir for a while.**

**If choir is about teaching and learning, growing, connecting, community, cultural exploration and transmission, and innovating – we will find a way to have choir.”**

**-- Kellie Walsh**



# OUR CALLING AT THIS TIME

**Vision/Mission Statement –**

comes to life with major adjustments

**Teaching / Learning - video**

musicianship skills, vocal technique, hymnody, new anthems



# OUR CALLING AT THIS TIME

**Community** – with greater intention (calls, etc.)

**Cultural** – affirmation + stretching

**Spiritual Nurture** – especially using lay leaders (let them be invested)

# FRAMING OUR CONVERSATION

**We all have different:**  
**Resources**  
**Infection Rates**  
**Safety Protocols**

# VISION, PROCEDURES, & PRACTICES

**Getting started –**

**make a list of things  
which must be adjusted**

# HOW DO WE GET THERE?

- Low hanging fruit first
- Small things, to medium things, to big things
- Until the vision sharpens and is cohesive.
- Then the congregation must buy-in and live out this new vision. Encourage one another.

*(call a friend: one on one is helpful)*

*(in conversation with senior pastor)*

# ZOOM GATHERING

1. **Start** - same each time w/celebratory feel (toasts)
2. **Predictability** (develop a format)
3. **Singing component** or listening assignment (ZOOM challenges) →



# ZOOM GATHERING

4. **Volunteer Leadership** – investment and variety
5. **Program** - inspirational
6. **Prayer** - joys & concerns
7. **Conclusion** -a charge or blessing

# WORSHIP

**Hymns** – one singer/organ alone, familiar & new,  
call & response

**VARIETY** – different voices & ages

**Service Music** – single recordings

ie: Kyrie, Gloria Patri, Doxology

# WORSHIP

**ANTHEM/OFFERTORY** – ages, families,  
instrumental

**BENEDICTION** – different ages

**VIRTUAL CHOIR** – invitational / significant drain of  
resources

**A CAPELLA APP** - collaborative

# PROGRAM MINISTRY

1. **The shape of a season** (kick-off, maintenance, special events, celebrations, close of season)
2. **Celebrations & Sharing** (birthdays, prayer concerns, sharing time, those who are alone)
3. **Something to look forward to: GOALS**
4. **Volunteer leaders help with buy-in**

# Celebrate, Celebrate, Celebrate

- Rites of passage (drive by parade, ice cream)
- Choir retirement
- I see you, I thank you
- Birthdays, engagements, baby shower
- Data milestones (choir enrollment, hours spent in rehearsal, etc.)
- Where there is smoke, there is life. Go there!

# Making Music in the Meantime



Neri da Rimini, 14th Century

# Making Music in the Meantime

[presbymusic.org](http://presbymusic.org)

1. Provide hymnals for each household or invite people to procure their own. Make use of these hymnals in online worship and encourage members to employ them for personal study, devotion, prayer, or in music making.

# Making Music in the Meantime

[presbymusic.org](http://presbymusic.org)

2. Recruit choir members and other singers in the congregation to call or video chat other members and sing a favorite hymn for them, or record in advance and send by email. This may serve as an entrée for pastoral care, outreach, or fellowship.



# Making Music in the Meantime

[presbymusic.org](http://presbymusic.org)

3. When congregational singing is not possible, worshipers may read and pray the words of hymns in silence while they are interpreted on the organ, piano, or other instrument(s).

# Making Music in the Meantime

[presbymusic.org](http://presbymusic.org)

4. As long as singing and wind instruments are restricted, organize handbell, string, or percussion ensembles to provide collaborative instrumental music—wearing masks as needed and maintaining appropriate distances.

# Making Music in the Meantime

[presbymusic.org](http://presbymusic.org)

5. Identify musicians who live in the same family or household and have been sheltering in place together and invite them to contribute collaborative video or audio recordings for online worship. When it is safe to gather outdoors or at a distance in the sanctuary they may also present musical offerings in public worship.

# Making Music in the Meantime

[presbymusic.org](http://presbymusic.org)

6. Select a hymn or song for the week, perhaps based on the biblical readings used in public worship or a season in the Christian year. Invite members to study, pray, sing, illustrate, or even memorize the selected hymn each week.

# Making Music in the Meantime

presbymusic.org

7. Use texts and images from hymns as a resource for personal spiritual disciplines such as *lectio divina*, breath prayer, or centering prayer. An instrumentalist might practice a melody as a form of prayer. Phrases or stanzas from hymns can be used in contemplation while exercising, creating visual art, or exploring nature.

# Making Music in the Meantime

[presbymusic.org](http://presbymusic.org)

8. Include meditations on hymn texts in sermons, educational offerings, church newsletters, social media posts, and other communication. Hymn texts are a valuable resource for theological reflection because they are memorable, evocative, concise, and accessible in their articulation of the faith.

# Making Music in the Meantime

[presbymusic.org](http://presbymusic.org)

9. Collaborate with neighboring congregations, ecumenical partners, and local musicians in the community to encourage one another, learn from one another, and find creative (and safe) ways of teaching new songs, reflecting on hymns, and making music together.

# Making Music in the Meantime

[presbymusic.org](http://presbymusic.org)

10. Do what you can with what you have ... and trust in God's grace. Try not to be anxious about keeping up with the most technologically adventurous or proficient congregations on the internet. Just glorify and enjoy God, worshiping and making music to the best of your ability at this time.



# Making Music in the Meantime

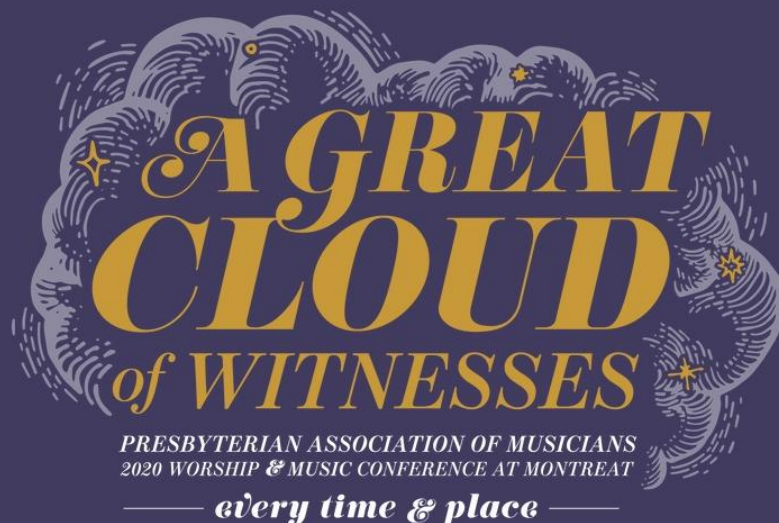
presbymusic.org

We weep with the psalmists: (Ps. 137:4)  
*“How can we sing the Lord’s song?”*

We pray with the prophets: (Isa. 35:10)  
*“And the ransomed of the Lord  
shall return with singing.”*

We sing with the whole creation: (Ps. 150:6)  
*“Let everything that breathes  
praise the Lord!”*

*Join us as we gather from every time and place...*



*This virtual conference offers a full week of worship and music for musicians, clergy, laypersons, choirs, youth, children, and families.*

*Guided by the principles of Reformed worship, conferees explore opportunities for vital worship experiences and enriching the liturgical life of the local church.*

*Live Dates: JUNE 21–26, 2020*

*Or Watch the Recordings Any Time Afterward!*