



NPM Summer Meeting – July 13, 2024 Our Lady of the Black Hills, Piedmont



A Retreat for Music Ministers

Schedule of Events

- 9:30 – 10:00am Registration / Refreshments (*St. Isaac Jogues, Rapid City*)
- 10:00 – 10:05am Welcome
- 10:05 – 10:15am Opening Prayer
- 10:15 – 12:10pm Reflections on Mary and the Eucharist – *facilitated by Sister Jacque Schroeder, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Immaculate Conception*
- 12:15 – 12:55pm Lunch / Business Meeting
- 1:00 – 2:00pm Reflections on Mary and the Eucharist – *facilitated by Sister Jacque Schroeder, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Immaculate Conception*
- 2:00 – 2:45pm Taizé Prayer Service (*musicians from Our Lady of the Black Hills*)

To help us secure an accurate lunch count, please RSVP to Carman Timmerman (ph. 605-391-4053, or by email, carmantimmerman@gmail.com), by Thursday, July 11, 2024.

Director's Letter

Ah, summertime! A season welcomed for the opportunities to kick back, enjoy outdoor activities in the sun and warmth, and take our busy schedules down a notch or two. Unless, of course, you are a music minister, whose time off throughout the year is often brief and sporadic.

Kudos to the tireless and dedicated efforts by all our music ministers, week in and week out, all year long. What a tremendous blessing you are to your parish community! While we can't give you two weeks away at an all-inclusive resort on some sunny faraway beach, we are delighted to offer you the opportunity to step back from the hustle and bustle for a well-deserved retreat experience, filled with reflection, prayer and song at our upcoming summer meeting at Our Lady of the Black Hills in Piedmont.

Our retreat facilitator is Sister Jacque Schroeder, known to many of you for her wonderful service in spiritual direction, recollection/retreat, and community ministry. See inside for more details on Sister Jacque and our planned retreat for you. Be sure to invite your fellow music ministers, spouse, family, and friends. It will be an uplifting and fulfilling day for all!

On behalf of Chantry Nelson and myself, we wish you all a wonderful summer, and we hope you will join us in July for a day to recharge and renew your spirituality.

Bonnie Josten
Co-Director, Rapid City NPM Chapter

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Summer Meeting 2024 Preview

We are delighted to offer all our diocesan music ministers a day focused on your well-being and spiritual health, as we turn our summer meeting into a day of retreat, reflection, and sung prayer. Please mark your calendars for **Saturday, July 13, at Our Lady of the Black Hills Church in Piedmont**, where you will experience time in recollection and renewal of our faith, singing, and contemplative prayer.

Leading our retreat day is Sister Jacqueline Schroeder, of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Immaculate Conception, a diocesan Religious Community of the Peoria Diocese in central Illinois. Sister Marion Lemon and Sister Jacqueline Schroeder first came to the Diocese of Rapid City in 1996, in response to the bishops' initiative creating a 'Sister Diocese' relationship, to share resources and foster a relationship between the two dioceses.



Sister Jacque Schroeder

After several years of service on the Standing Rock Reservation, Sister Jacque and Sister Marion returned to their Peoria Motherhouse. Later, at the invitation of Bishop Robert Gruss to return to serve at Standing Rock, Sister Jacque returned to our diocese in 2016.

More recently, Sister Jacque has served at Terra Sancta in a new ministry modeled after "Franciscan Spirituality and Resource Service." She offers retreats, spiritual direction, and days/evenings of recollection throughout the diocese at individual parishes and at Terra Sancta Retreat Center. For our retreat, Sister Jacque will offer '*Reflections on Mary and the Eucharist.*'

To close our day, we will offer a Taizé prayer service, led by musicians from Our Lady of the Black Hills. We hope you leave the retreat rejuvenated in spirit and faith. We look forward to seeing you at Our Lady of the Black Hills Church on July 13th!



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2024 Spring Meeting Recap

Over twenty diocesan music ministers gathered at St. Michael's Church in Hermosa for our Chapter's Spring meeting, on April 27, 2024. Ali Van Sambeek of St. Michael's led the Divine Office of Morning Prayer in the sanctuary.

The day began with a **"Mass Parts Showcase"** featuring music ministers from five parishes: St. Michael's (Hermosa), Holy Cross (Timber Lake), St. John the Baptist (Custer), St. Therese the Little Flower (Rapid City), and Blessed Sacrament (Rapid City).

The host parish, St. Michael's, led by Chantry Nelson and singers from the church presented selections from the St. Philip Neri Mass, 2nd ed. (Paul Jernberg, pub. Magnificat Institute of Sacred Music, 2011). Nelson had recently spoken with Jernberg on the phone; he had emphasized that he composed the SATB+ mass, which fuses elements of Gregorian and Orthodox chant, to be suitable for a wide range of resources, including unison singing in small parishes with "discrete" organ accompaniment (he stressed using organ over piano, and keeping any accompaniment neutral and well under the singers' voices). Whatever the resources used, he said, the music "needs to have a sense of life and prayerfulness." To that end, singers should phrase well and "sing flexibly." Spring Meeting attendees sang through the Gloria (a capella), plus the Holy, Lamb of God, and Memorial Acclamation B (with "organ"-setting keyboard accompaniment).

Next up, Sheila Schweitzer and Marlene Biegler from Holy Cross discussed how they regularly use three Mass settings: the Heritage Mass, Mass of Christ the Savior, and Mass of Renewal (Christmas, Easter). All are in Breaking Bread. They sing five parts: the Gloria, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen, and Lamb of God. With the Mass of Christ the Savior, they choose to omit the repeats in the Gloria. Doing so conforms better to the original ancient text. Also, when sung with repeats, this Gloria is so long they feel it overwhelms the rest of the service.

They were followed by Ed and Jeanie Fischer from St. John the Baptist, noting their church has two Masses (Saturday vigil, Sunday morning). One uses guitar accompaniment (played by Ed) and the other uses piano, so any Mass setting used must work for both services. From May-September (the traditional "tourist season") they use the universally-known Heritage Mass, Mass of Renewal for Christmas and Easter, and Chant Mass during Advent and Lent, to reflect the more subdued nature of these liturgical seasons. They never mix the parts of one mass with another. Overall, Ed said, they "try not to do anything that will keep [the congregation] from singing," and they will adjust the setting (as needed) to a key better suited to a standard vocal range.



Mass Parts Showcase. From L-R; Singers from St. Michael's, Holy Cross, and St. John the Baptist.

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Next, singers from St. Therese, led by Sue Englin, sang portions of the Mass of a Joyful Heart (comp. Steve Angrisano & Tom Tomaszek, pub. OCP, 2012). Since 2021, the parish sings it in the summers. Englin noted OCP's website (OCP.org) describes this Mass setting as "upbeat and fun...[capturing] the spirit of the young Church through contemporary rhythms and easily accessible melodies." According to OCP, the Mass setting was commissioned for the National Catholic Youth Conference; its composers aimed "to craft an approachable set of songs with familiar themes that faithfully present the texts of the Roman Missal, Third Edition."



Singers from St. Therese

Closing out the showcase program were singers from Blessed Sacrament, led by Teresa Spiess. They led two movements of the Mass of St. Augustine (comp. Joe Higgenbotham, pub. ILP, 2011). This is one of seven Mass settings in the Credo hymnal (ILP) currently used by Blessed Sacrament. Spiess noted the parish musicians chose this Mass setting by meeting together, singing through all seven settings in the hymnal, and picking a favorite (this one). Meeting attendees sang the (English-language) *Santus* and *Agnus Dei* off SATB handouts; their vocals were complimented by a rhythmic, arpeggiated keyboard arrangement.

Following the showcase program was a panel discussion on "**Successful Working Relationships Between Pastor and Music Minister.**" Panelists included Ed and Jeanie Fischer (St. John the Baptist, Custer), Sheila Schweitzer (Holy Cross, Timber Lake), Holly Waddell (Blessed Sacrament, Bison), and Msgr. Michael Woster (priest for 42 years of active ministry, now retired). Carman Timmerman (St. Therese, Rapid City) moderated. Six discussion topics elicited the following:

All the musician panelists have a *good relationship with their current pastor*. Except for funerals, *none of the musicians are paid for their ministry*, and none seem to mind. Jeanie and Ed Fischer regard all their music work as "a service to God" and "never really think about getting paid." In the event of a funeral, Jeanie has the funeral home send her stipend to Custer's altar guild or another parish fund. At Bison, thanks in part to their priest, the funeral home includes music as a line item in their bill, ensuring compensation. Waddell sometimes spends hers on things like "an extra piece of music for the library."

The three lay panelists' unpaid duties are not necessarily limited to music. In addition to coordinating the music for Custer's Masses, Jeanie Fischer also does funeral planning and heads the liturgy committee. She noted "We do not have a music director, and we never will. For those of us in small parishes, we know it's tough to keep things staffed up."

Meeting frequency between musicians and minister varies. This is due in part to multiple-parish priest assignments. Custer shares a priest with Hot Springs and Edgemont; Timber Lake, with Isabel and Trail City; Bison, with Buffalo, Ralph, Cox, and Reva. Custer's priest lives in Hot Springs (30 miles away) and Bison's in Buffalo (53 miles).

Schweitzer commented she has seasonal meetings with fellow musicians, but no real meetings with her priest, and simply prints out any instructions he sends her. She serves as the point person between three music groups. At Custer, the music groups meet with each other 1-2 times per year, primarily to choose new hymns. Fishers meet seasonally with their priest to "review what's just happened...[and] what's coming up." At Bison, Waddell has

occasional meetings; she has found their priest is content to let the musicians “take the lead” in programming music. From the clergy perspective, Msgr. Woster recalled from his days in active ministry, he scheduled weekly meetings with his music ministers in order “to touch base.” In these meetings, he budgeted time for both the known agenda and last-minute additions.



Panel discussion. From L-R: Msgr. Michael Woster, Holly Waddell, Sheila Schweitzer, Ed Fischer, Jeannie Fischer, Carman Timmerman.

Informal socializing between pastor and music minister also varies. All the panelists recommend hosting a meal and/or taking your priest out to dinner occasionally. Availability (of the priest) is a challenge at the more rural parishes, due to distances required to travel between his assigned parishes. However, the priests are very appreciative of any hospitality shown them. Panelists noted that in a small community, priest-socializing can be fraught; occasionally, when a particular priest “clicks with one or two families,” it can make everyone else feel left out. Msgr. Woster said that personal relationships between laity and priest always involve a balance and it requires honesty and openness. In his experience the relationships can be successfully negotiated, even for ones of long duration.

Unprompted, Msgr. Woster posed the question, “***How’s everybody doing with the current re-emphasis on the Latin and chant?***” noting that some of these young priests are “coming in” prioritizing Latin, chant, and the organ as “king” of church instruments. The rest of the panel reported that none of this had “trickled down” to their parishes yet. Woster explained that these young priests come out of this increasingly very secular society and are resisting it. They are re-reading the Vatican II documents and feel that, when first implemented, these documents “may have been kind of misapplied...and you know there was kind of some truth to that.” Woster acknowledged the Rapid City Diocese was spared a lot of the post-Vatican II extremes (“Liturgical dance – remember that?” he asked, to general laughter). He pointed out that Latin is not “bad,” and added the documents call for the judicious use of Latin. Whatever language is sung, Woster noted music ministers should work hard to cultivate “a culture of participation.”

What comes next for this diocese will depend on who its next bishop is. “There’s [church] law, and then there’s the interpretation,” said Woster, noting that the bishop is the “final arbiter” of that interpretation; “he sets the tone by what happens at Cathedral.” He added, “Our late Bishop Peter Muhich was schooled the way I was schooled, you know, kind of open to everything.”

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Panelists had a variety of feedback to this topic, noting there were good things that came out of Vatican II, and expressing concerns about returning to the liturgies we knew as a child in the 1960's. Others noted that Latin is "anachronistic at its core, and kind of elitist." This prompted more feedback on general resistance (by the congregations) to Latin hymns, noting "Attende Domine" is "too much for us." Woster responded that we (as Catholics) want to keep our sacred history, adding if the community does learn the Latin and then starts singing it, that is a beautiful thing.

Regarding *conflict between the pastor and the music minister*, the consensus was the music minister should (always) defer to the priest, and the priest should (always) listen to the concerns of the music minister. Msgr. Woster noted he approaches music ministers with profound respect and with gratitude – you realize that they are offering their lives" to this ministry. He added that things go south when one or both parties start looking at only their own side of things. He compared it to a marriage: "there will be disagreements, but if you have a sense the other person is really working for the Lord," that mitigates animosity.

In Woster's experience as diocesan arbitrator, "about 99% of the time," conflicts come to a good resolution. "The office of the priest according to canon law, is to LISTEN," he said. "Priests are human. If you approach him, a good pastor will take [your suggestion] and think about it. And then later he may come around...but not always. Ultimately, the priest is in charge, and sometimes, you know, he's got to pull that trigger." Woster added when a disagreement cannot be resolved, then it must remain private and "kept in the security of the office." If it is not, then "the parish suffers."

Some of the panelists admitted they do not like confrontation and defer to the wishes of the priest. Waddell noted she does not see their priest often, but he communicates well. "He stresses [that] everything in the mass should lead towards prayer – that is always the first thing for him. [So] if the service is going slow and meditative, you [need to] make your music to fit that. He really has an effective way of saying that, you know, to make it clear to the musicians." Schweitzer added she wants to be respectful of everyone's gifts. She added their priest is usually okay with whatever we do, but if he wants to change something, we just go with it - he has the final word.

Fischers noted in Custer, their priest is in his first parish, and therefore still "new to the job." Ed Fischer said their "relationship is growing," and that Father "does like to sing." Regarding unwanted changes: "There is an element of church law in it, you know: 'swallow hard and learn.' Seems like if there is respect between the two parties, things can be worked out. "I think it's important for the celebrant to know that the music minister is reliable – you know, they show up, they do their job." He added that musicians need to be willing to try something new; in the end, their job is enabling the congregation. Jeannie Fischer added it's important to pick your battles, and don't sweat the small stuff. She emphasized the relationship of trust (between musician and priest) is crucial. Ed Fischer agreed, noting "the relationship of trust" is the only thing the people out in the pews can see.

Msgr. Woster closed by observing that a good pastor should be open to latest ideas and give feedback. "[We] priests have tremendous respect for what you [music ministers] do. We need you." Church documents allow for accommodations. "Especially those of you in smaller parishes. You do what you can do; be who you are, be the best that you can be."

Both afternoon programs featured Chantry Nelson from St. Michael's. First, as **Sage on Stage**, she explored elements which have contributed to her parish being a "singing congregation." She noted St. Michael's sanctuary,

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by design, has no choir area. The congregation's attitude is we (the congregation) are the choir, and it is our job to sing. Prior to the build of the new church in 2016, the old church (approximate capacity of 60) had congregants crammed in the pews for two Masses. One mass was usually unaccompanied, so the entire congregation became accustomed to singing a capella, and usually sang all the verses to every hymn. The cantor led only the Psalm and Gospel Acclamation. With no choir, good singers were seated throughout the congregation, where they led by example.

When Nelson became pianist in January 2017, the whole congregation was attending a single Sunday mass in a spacious brand-new building. She did not change the musical setup much, and the congregation still sings. Nelson plays nearly all hymns in their original keys. This means "Silent Night" (in Bb) goes up to Eb5. Not everybody hits that note, but many seem to, and everybody appears to sing it with joy. Congregants also joyfully sing hymns with grace notes (GROSSER GOTT, original form, has grace notes on 'In-*fi-i*-nite thy vast *do-o*-main," etc.), melismas (e.g., GLORIA) fast passages (BRYN CALFARIA), and hymns with leaps and broad ranges. Nelson observed that musically, St. Michael's congregation will try anything, and once they know it well, everyone in the pews will sing from start to finish, even if a hymn has six verses. Near the end of Communion she goes up to receive, leaving the congregation to finish the last verse a capella. If the hymn is familiar, sometimes one or two congregants will break into harmony.

From all of this (plus extensive musical experience elsewhere), Nelson devised "Congregational Participation" theories. Regarding the nationwide complaint that many congregants no longer sing in church, she points out that these people probably do not sing anywhere else, either. Fifty years ago, far more people sang in the yard, on the playground, in the car, at parties and sports events. Singing was an integral part of people's lives. Now it is so rare that people apologize for it ("I promise I won't sing").

Nelson constantly hears music ministers talk of lowering hymn keys. Some stick to easy and/or limited-range tunes, and rarely play more than two verses of opening and closing hymns. The idea seems to be, let us lower the bar, make it easy for even the oldest or most physically challenged person to at least mumble out a note or two. Nelson challenges these perceptions, noting that singing takes energy. When you put real energy into it, it is fun. But there is more. God gave us our voices for a *reason*. Singing in a group, the singer experiences a connection with those around them. In a church, singing to God, the singer can experience a simultaneous connection to both God and others; everyone connected to each other and to God. It can be a heavenly experience.



Nelson encourages the mindset that congregational singing is worshipful, it's our job to sing, and it's our job to put energy into our singing, pour ourselves into it, just like – at our best – we pour ourselves into prayer. "He who sings, prays twice." Singing doesn't have to be "good," it doesn't even have to be on pitch. That's nice, but it's not the main point. The main point is to do it; to actively worship God with the gifts you have.

At left: Chantry Nelson, Sage on Stage presentation.

As a music minister, Nelson believes that developing a wide singing range and flexible technique is *desirable*. Hymns which mildly challenge the average singer helps them build and use vocal skills, which builds confidence, which creates someone who enjoys singing. Wherever possible, singing every verse of each hymn not only builds

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stamina, but also engages the congregation in an activity that lasts long enough that they have time to sink into it, to be in that moment, to enter that connected, heavenly sphere. Nelson closed by observing she did not build St. Michael's singing culture – she inherited it. She believes if it can exist at St. Michael's, it could be developed elsewhere.

Nelson then segued into the day's final presentation, **“Selecting Music to Match the Readings of the Day.”** Nelson emphasizes any selection of sacred music should always consider the text. She was taught that a big part of the music minister's job is to help the readings for the day come alive. Accordingly, she begins Mass music selection by reading the designated Mass readings in the Bible and reads them in context and does the same for the Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation texts. She then prays on the texts, letting them sit in the back of her mind. Like many, she finds OCP's *Today's Liturgy* music planner a valuable tool, but to facilitate felicitous “outside the box” choices (and not automatically pick all her music from *TL*'s “Music Suggestions” list), she begins her selection process *before* consulting it. She jots down hymns ideas as she thinks of them, consults *Today's Liturgy's* list, and adds more choices, and then, a day or two before the Mass, makes her final selection.

Besides the readings, Nelson considers previous tradition, and keeps two chronological lists (Word, Excel) of all hymns sung. If the congregation “always” sings “Christ the Lord Is Risen Again” (LLANFAIR) on Easter Sunday, she will generally stick to that. For the same reason, she includes a patriotic hymn on national holidays (Memorial Day, Fourth of July), but will use them as a congregational prelude. During the Christmas season, she will utilize time for pre-Mass carols to incorporate the abundance of hymns specific to this season. Several of these hymns and carols (e.g., “O Holy Night”) are handouts that are reused as needed. Nelson creates her own, using Finale (music-writing software) but notes other options are also available online (ex. One License). Handouts help her choose the music best suited to the readings, the day, and her congregation. When *Breaking Bread* dropped congregational favorites “My Country 'Tis of Thee” and “Lord You Have Come to the Seashore,” Nelson created handouts. In 2022, concerned by a perceived dearth of “Real Presence” hymns in *Breaking Bread*, the three-person Hermosa Music Committee created (from scratch) the 24-hymn Communion Hymn Supplement Booklet now in St. Michael's pews. While the parish's Music Committee eventually disbanded due to scheduling conflicts, Nelson cited advantages/disadvantages to picking hymns alone, but noted she does miss hearing other points of view for hymn selection.

New hymns must occasionally be introduced, or the congregation musically stagnates. Nelson feels these are best learned by singing them often (ex. every Mass for a month), but such programming almost never fits the days' readings. So, with more-difficult hymns, she sometimes programs the hymn for an appropriate future date, and then, several weeks prior, has the congregation sing it every Sunday as a congregational prelude.

The meeting ended with Closing Prayer, led by Holly Waddell of Blessed Sacrament Church, Bison. We encourage all Rapid City Diocese music ministers and clergy to attend quarterly NPM meetings at which education, prayer and fellowship are the focal points. For more information about the Rapid City Chapter of National Pastoral Musicians, go to our website (www.npmrc.org) or Facebook page (www.facebook.com/NPMRapidCityChapter).



NPM 2024 Calendar of Events

Date: July 13, 2024
Event: Summer NPM Meeting / Day of Retreat – facilitated by Sister Jacqueline Schroeder, of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Immaculate Conception. The retreat ends with a Taizé prayer service.
Location: Our Lady of the Black Hills Church, Piedmont, SD

Date: TBD (October 2024)
Event: Fall NPM Meeting / St. Cecilia Banquet
Location: TBD (tentatively, St. Francis of Assisi, Sturgis)
Topics: tentatively: Presentation on GIRM; Techniques in Singing Chant; Music Reading Sessions

If you have any upcoming special music events in your parish or in your community that involve fellow NPM members, email Bonnie Josten (bonnie.josten@gmail.com) with event information, so we can add it to our calendar.

Notification deadlines (to include in our quarterly newsletters) are as follows:

- Fall Newsletter – September 6, 2024



Check the NPM website for more information, <http://npm.org>, or send your inquiries to npmsing@npm.org.

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