

In 1995 a very close friend of mine from NW Iowa was visiting with Helen Canine at a music conference and shared the information that I had moved to West Des Moines with my family that previous summer. My first year here in Des Moines was devoted to helping my family transition to a much larger city as well as adjust to having a newborn - Rebecca was just 2 months old when we moved!

Helen Canine let me know that Windsor Heights Lutheran Church was looking to hire an additional organist for the 2nd service only, and helped me get connected with an audition and interview meeting. People involved in this meeting were Pastor Dick Rehfeldt, Laurie Meyer, Helen, and others ... some sitting here in this space today.

My previous position as Minister Of Music at St. John's Lutheran Church in LeMars, Iowa helped me hone my skills in coordinating a music program, and Pastor Rehfeldt was prescient in his own very special way. He paired us as new members with Barb and Joel Waymire, who we continue a friendship with to this day. He also let me know at that first meeting that he thought in addition to organist responsibilities, he believed there would be another staff position created titled Music Coordinator, which I ultimately held until 2012.

The same August that I was hired here at WHLC I was also hired by West Des Moines Community Schools as Staff Accompanist for both Valley High School and Southwoods Freshman High School. In 2010 I was hired as accompanist for the Drake Choir and Chamber Choir, which rehearsed following a full day of public school hours. When my youngest was ready to start college I had been doing a lot of soul searching and culminated my music ministry in order to attend her college concerts and activities ... things I didn't do as much of with the older 2 girls.

That same kind of soul searching led me to "retire" from public school in 2017 after 22 years, and I am now full days at Drake University on the accompanist staff which encompasses many more tasks beyond choir rehearsals. I basically call it graduating from high school and going to college!

I look back on the years that I had church, high school, college, and family responsibilities and wonder just how that all happened!

My husband, Craig, is not able to be here because he is currently attending a conference in Chicago. He is the Executive Director of the Iowa High School Speech Association and Senior Associate Director of the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union. Retirement is coming, but no date has been set - - yet.

We have 3 daughters:

Megan (Augustana - Sioux Falls grad) is a professional classical vocalist in the New Music genre, and performs across the country year round. She is also a music career specialist and lectures on campuses as well as online. She currently lives in West Des Moines near us, however, she has plans to relocate to a much warmer climate this fall.

Courtney (Wartburg grad) also lives near us in West Des Moines and is beginning her 9th year as a K-5 General Music teacher at Hanawalt Elementary, just down the road apiece. She additionally is a board certified Music Therapist and enjoys working with her adaptive class students.

Rebecca (Gustavus Adolphus grad) has been in Omaha for 3 years as the Office Manager for Opera Omaha. She also performs with her oboe with the Nebraska Wind Symphony. We enjoy going over for productions and doing other fun things there.

Craig and I will be celebrating 40 years of marriage this August and just recently became members of Faith Lutheran Church in Clive. This has led us to do a lot of reflection back on our years here at WHLC.

Windsor Heights Lutheran was a significant part of our Des Moines experience and we have made long lasting friendships here. In my time on staff at WHLC I traveled the road of playing for Saturday and Sunday worship services utilizing a variety of instrumentation, service formats and creative concepts. I particularly remember Taizé, Easter Vigil, outdoor worship, organizing the Palm Sunday processional, creating the annual Choral Worship, and arranging for the Orchestra for Christmas Eve worship.

I traveled the road of accompanying as well as directing various choral and handbell ensembles, especially remembering when Senior Choir changed to Alleluia Choir, the Men's Ensemble, Women's Ensemble, and creating with Nancy Lee the Saturday night Ensemble.

I traveled the road with other staff in reorganizing and leading the music program to evolve with the changes in congregation, worship planning in regards to style, times, location, and focus which occupied many hours of committee time.

I appreciated the opportunity provided by this congregation to attend on an annual basis the Worship Music and Theology Conference held at St. Olaf College. When more than 1 music staff members were able to attend it provided a much needed battery recharge as well as valuable creative ideas to bring back home.

I traveled the road with many congregation members by playing for weddings, anniversaries, and funerals that were emotional life occasions. And I lived my faith journey with people here - staff as well as congregation - which will never be forgotten.

I am grateful to be asked to come back and give a reflection, and I wish you a joyous Anniversary Celebration!