



Musical Scholars Program Information

St. John's Episcopal Church
226 West State St.
Sharon, PA 16146
724.347.4501
www.stjohnssharon.org

For more information, contact:
The Rev. Dr. Adam T. Trambley, Rector
cell: 814.688.7709
atrambley@gmail.com

St. John's Musical Scholar Program
June 2018 Proposal

Summary: The St. John's Musical Scholar Program would take 12-30 high school students and pay them a stipend to attend a weekday choir rehearsal, Sunday morning choir rehearsal, Sunday morning worship, and an hour of Christian formation and discipleship programming (5 hours/week total). This program would provide choral musical experience; help form young people in liturgical worship; create an age cohort to provide an introduction to topics of Christian formation and discipleship; create a top-notch worship experience for students, their parents and friends, the parish, and the community; teach basic job skills; and provide a job opportunity for young people that does not take them away from church involvement.

Goal: The primary goal of this program is to pass on the Christian faith to the next generation.

Objectives:

1. Provide an incentive for young people to make a significant commitment to attending liturgical worship such that it has an opportunity to form them.
2. Provide a Christian formation experience through a small-group for young people with common interests in music and the arts.
3. Teach the liturgy and the liturgical worship tradition to the next generation in a way that combines theory, practice, and formation.
4. Create an excellent liturgical experience that is meaningful to current parishioners, new members, participating scholars, and the scholars' families.
5. Develop liturgical leadership in the church for the next generation.
6. Provide a regular, paid commitment that puts young people in church Sunday morning instead of taking them away from church.
7. Use the liturgy as an evangelism tool.
8. Allow a critical mass of young people to have an important role and focus in the parish and in the Sunday morning liturgy such that the needs and experiences of a younger generation have a greater role in the mission and ministry of the church at every level.

Requirements

1. Music director able to:
 - a. Work with high school students on their musical development as individuals and as a choir
 - b. Integrate young people into the parish music program
 - c. Select appropriate music for developing young musicians in the worship context
2. Formation programming
 - a. Appropriate curriculum for the age group that teaches the liturgical tradition to explain what they are doing as a choir while as incorporating age-appropriate faith development topics
 - b. Leaders: Rector, Music Director, at least one other leader
 - c. Parishioners to act as "godparents" for youth and their families
3. Funding
 - a. Requirements:

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- i. \$2000 per scholar (\$10 hour x 5 hours/week x 36 weeks + holidays + vestments)
 - ii. Small addition to stipend of music director
 - iii. Food/Curriculum/other expenses for formation time
 - b. Potential Sources
 - i. Parish budget/other parish funding
 - ii. Individual sponsorships
 - iii. Diocesan grants
 - iv. Community Foundation
 - v. Local music clubs/organizations
- 4. Partnerships with
 - a. Area High School Choir Directors (Sharon, Farrell, Hickory, West Middlesex, Sharpville, Reynolds, Brookfield, Hubbard)
 - b. Community Foundation
 - c. Sharon Music Club, Shenango Valley Choral, other local music societies

Proposed Start-Up Timeline:

May 2018

- Rector and Music Director agree on basic shape of program and next steps.

June 2018

- Bring project to the Vestry for initial feedback and approval for further exploration
- Wider discussions with parish
- Discussions with Diocese, Community Foundation, and other potential funders
- Concept discussions with local music teachers and others

July 2018

- Develop position description for Musical Scholars
- Develop funding proposals for program
- Identify formation facilitator and other needed volunteers
- Get final vestry approval

August 2018

- Finalize budget (including income sources) and pilot program parameters
- Contact school choir directors with application for Musical Scholars position

September 2018

- Interview potential Musical Scholars and make selections

October 2018

- Launch pilot program for October through Pentecost.

Initial Budget 2018-2019 Pilot: 12 Students

Expenses

Student Stipends (\$1,800 x 12) =	\$21,600
Robes (\$200 x 12) =	\$ 2,400
Misc Expenses =	\$ 1,000
<i>Total Expenses</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>



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St. John's Musical Scholars Program

What is it?

St. John's Musical Scholars Program offers high school choral students the opportunity to be part of an established, multi-generational church choir while also participating in a weekly education and formation program designed for specifically for them. Musical Scholars receive a competitive stipend equivalent to \$10/hour in order to free up time from work and other responsibilities to dedicate to their musical development.

Who can participate?

High School students involved in their school's music programs that have been accepted into auditioned ensembles, such as chamber or show choirs. For the 2018-2019 pilot year, preference is being given to students from Sharon and Farrell, but we hope to expand the program in future years. We are looking for scholars with a basic choral competency that can handle the responsibilities of the program appropriately.

When is the program?

The St. John's Musical Scholars program runs from October through early June. Education and choir rehearsals are most Wednesday evenings from 6:30pm-9:00pm. Sunday morning rehearsal and worship are from 9:00am-11:30am. Participation in choral liturgies on Christmas Eve and during Holy Week and Easter are also expected.

Do I have to be Episcopalian to participate?

No. Students of any or no faith background are invited to apply. The program does involve participating in Christian worship and general Christian education, however. Students, parents, or pastors who have questions or concerns may contact Father Adam for more detail.

How do I apply?

Fill out the attached application which includes basic information about you, your musical and work experience, a short essay, a statement signed by you and your parent or guardian stating that you understand the requirements of the program, and a recommendation from your choir director. Please return the application to St. John's by September 10, 2018.

For more information:

Please contact our Music Director, Ron Gracilla, via call or text at 724-456-8848 or at ron@stjohnssharon.org or Father Adam Trambley at fatheradam@stjohnssharon.org

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St. John's Musical Scholars Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Highschool: _____

Grade Entering: _____ Choir/Music Teacher : _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Address: _____

Parent/Guardian City, State, Zip: _____

Parent/Guardian Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please list your choir involvement and any other musical activities:

Please list any other work or volunteer experience:

Please write a short paragraph (about 100 words) describing why you would like to participate in the St. John's Musical Scholars Program:

Attach the choir director recommendation form and the signed student and parent/guardian contract form.

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**St. John's Musical Scholars
Student and Parent/Guardian Contract**

I understand that participating in the St. John's Musical Scholar program requires regular weekly participation in two choir rehearsals, one hour of education and formation, and one worship service, and that two more unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the program. I also understand that participation in worship for Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter is required. I am committed to being present, engaged, and on-time for all activities and to behave appropriately. I also understand that St. John's is a church, and that I will be participating in religious activities.

Student Signature

I understand that my child's participation in the St. John's Musical Scholar program requires regular weekly participation in two choir rehearsals, one hour of education and formation, and one worship service, and that two more unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the program. I also understand that participation in worship for Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter is required. I will support my child in being faithful in attendance. I also understand that St. John's is a church, and I give permission for my child to participate in the religious activities that are part of the St. John's Musical Scholars program.

Parent/Guardian Signature



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**St. John's Musical Scholars Program
Choir Director Recommendation Form**

Name of Student: _____

Name of Choir Director/Music Teacher: _____

School: _____

How long and in what capacity have you known this student:

Has this student demonstrated the ability to contribute to a chamber choir or show choir level musical ensemble?

Yes: ____ Not yet: _____

Has this student demonstrated a reliability in being present for musical commitments and acting appropriately in rehearsals and performances?

Yes: ____ No: ____ Sometimes (Please explain): _____

Please add any comments regarding the music skills and character of this student and whether you would recommend them as a musical scholar.



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**St. John's Musical Scholars
Photo/Video/Sound Release**

I give permission for my child, _____,
to be photographed or audio recorded or video recorded for us in the churches media, including
website, newsletter, Facebook, and other social media, and in Musical Scholars fundraising and
reporting materials. St. John's will not use names with photographs on our website or on
Facebook or other social media, although individuals may tag photos if they choose.

X _____
Parent/Guardian Signature

St. John's Musical Scholars First Year Report June 2019

Executive Summary

The St. John's Musical Scholars Program was developed in 2018 as a pilot project to draw on our parish's strong liturgical worship and choral tradition as an outreach to high school students interested in choral music. The Scholars program pays high school choral students a stipend to attend a weekday choir rehearsal, Sunday morning choir rehearsal, Sunday morning worship, and an hour of Christian formation programming (5 hours/week total). This program is designed to help pass on the Christian faith to the next generation. We seek pass on our faith by creating a choral music experience that creates an age cohort for Christian formation, offers a high-quality liturgical worship experience that introduces and forms our scholars in that worship tradition while benefitting their families, friends, and the parish, teaches basic job skills, and provides a job opportunity that encourages instead of impedes church involvement.

For its initial Fall 2018-Spring 2019 pilot year, the musical scholars program was moderately successful. High school participants in the program developed their faith and gained musical skill proficiency while feeling loved by and a part of a multi-generational choir and church community. The impact on worship by the additional choir voices was positive, with some particularly beautiful and moving moments. At the same time, the number of program participants was less than we had planned. We learned that the barriers to high school students' participation in church events may be higher than we anticipated and that participation by the scholars in worship did not generally bring family or friends to church with them. St. John's has committed to learning from our first year and to continuing this program for 2019-2020.

Program Participants

Over the course of the pilot year, we worked with seven total students, all of whom filled out initial surveys about their spiritual well-being and spiritual practices. All were involved in an auditioned choir and received a recommendation from their choir director. Six were juniors and one was a senior. We had originally reached out to two area high schools for the initial pilot, but received follow-up and students only from Sharon High School, whose choir director also provided input on the initial program set-up. We began the program with six female voices. Within six weeks, two scholars dropped out for personal reasons, although one did come back for a few weeks in the spring. Two months into the program, one male singer joined the program. At the end of the year, we had five scholars that had participated through most of the year, all of whom filled out a written program evaluation and retook the spiritual well-being and spiritual practices survey.

Outcomes

Faith Development

Our primary program goal is to pass on the Christian faith to the next generation. The program has two primary methods to achieve this goal. First, we incentivize young people to make a significant commitment to attend liturgical worship such that it has an opportunity to form them. Second, we provide a Christian formation experience through a small-group for young people

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with common interests in music and the arts. Our goal of faith development was successful. All five students who completed their final evaluation said that the program did help their faith. One said, “[This program] made me feel closer to God.” Another, whose family had a church membership, said, “I have never really looked at religion as something that was important to me and now it means something to me,” while a third said, “It’s made me like church again.” The final two said that, “My perspective was broadened and it has made more aware of everything that happens outside of my own life,” and, “It made me question things more.”

Early in the program, we began doing a modified Ignatian Examen with the scholars at the beginning of the formation time. We had a few minutes of silence, invited God to be present, and allowed people to think about their highs and lows for the day. Then we shared those highs and lows, and the leaders offered perspective on how God might be present in the midst of those times. On her evaluation, one scholar noted that her favorite parts of the program were singing duets with another scholar and that reflection time during the formation class.

While only two of the initial seven claimed church membership on the initial survey, four of the five completing the program said they were part of a church, with two of them listing St. John’s as that church. The final scholar said she was not part of a church but “I want to keep going to this one.” The number of scholars is still too small to draw significant conclusions from most of the survey results, but there did seem to be small movements in various questions, as well as in the number of those who have read the Bible or other spiritual literature in the past month.

Musical Development

Program participants and their choral and orchestra teachers noted a significant development in the scholar’s musical capacity. A number of scholars said the program improved their ability to read music. One mentioned specifically development of her range. A scholar who also plays cello for the school orchestra worked on a number of choral pieces incorporating cello, as well as cello preludes and postludes. He noted that these pieces were more difficult than what he worked on for high school orchestra and developed his technique. The high school orchestra teacher attended our Scholars Recognition Sunday, and was grateful for the musical development she saw in our cellist, as well as the other scholars. She said she planned on recommending the program to a number of her other students.

Connection to the Parish

The scholars themselves did connect with the parish. Their primary connections were with the rector, the music director, and a choir member who co-led the Christian formation time with the rector. They also became integrated into the intergenerational choir and built relationships with other choir members. At least one choir member was in regular text contact with a scholar struggling through a variety of family issues. A pick-up supper was regularly held following the parish’s Wednesday evening Eucharist. The dinner occurred right before the scholars’ formation time, and many would come a bit early to have dinner and interact with other members of the parish.

The parish supported the scholars, as well, in ways that seemed appreciated. Parishioners and choir members attended school plays and choir concerts. Ten parishioners traveled to New Castle to see a scholar in a local playhouse production. The formation co-leader took four scholars to

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see a production of Handel's Messiah before Christmas. As shown in the surveys, many scholars now see St. John's as their church.

Church Development

Some of our secondary goals for the program related to church development either did not occur or require more time to accomplish. One goal is to develop young leaders that understand the liturgy and the music of the church and can participate in and contribute to liturgical worship environments going forward. We seem to be on the way towards that goal, but cannot evaluate it in the short term. Another goal that we are moving toward is having more young people with musical backgrounds participating in the choir and providing input into the music choices in ways that could connect with younger generations. The scholars' final evaluations had some comments about music choice and selection that could be helpful. We expect scholars in their second year to be better prepared to offer helpful feedback and input.

The scholars' musical impact on the liturgy was strong and positive, especially as they developed their comfort and musicality. Scholars were able to do solos and duets, to strengthen sections and parts, and to add flute and cello music. All of these additions were appreciated by the congregation and added to worship in meaningful ways. As some scholars enter their second year, and additional scholars participate, we expect these elements to develop further.

One area that fell far below our expectations was the program's impact on family and friends. We hoped that parents, siblings, grandparents, and friends would attend church somewhat regularly to hear the scholars sing. Over the eight months of the program, we had a total of 27 visits by family members and friends, with 11 of those occurring on our Scholars' Recognition Sunday. Even when the scholars were doing solos or duets that would have brought families to school concerts, parents did not generally come to church.

Key Learnings From Year One

Attendance Barriers Are Considerable

One of our disappointments was the difficulty in both recruiting scholars and getting consistent attendance. Originally we had hoped for as many as twelve scholars, and ended the year with five. Even though the scholars seemed to have a positive experience, that experience did not translate into significantly more young people wanting to participate. Additionally, those that did participate did not all maintain attendance patterns that we had expected. In some cases, we were notified of absences, but often we were not. The five scholars that finished the year with us were present for 75% of the classes and services we had expected. Interestingly, the one scholar who referred to the program as "coming to work" was there 95% of the time, much more than those who talked about "coming to church." In some cases, attendance issues seemed to be tied to broader family issues. If a scholar was at one parent's house for the weekend or had control of their own schedule after school, they came. If they were with the other parent, they tended not to.

We had expected that paying \$10/hour, a higher wage than other high school job options, would encourage attendance. However, the pay did not seem to be a primary motivation for most. Without the stipend, it is unlikely the scholars would have joined. Some scholars took a few months, however, even to provide the necessary paperwork to get paid. In other cases, the

feedback we received from those who chose not to participate indicate that even with a stipend, either scholars or their parents were not willing to commit to a regular Sunday morning job.

All Students Do Not Have Bank Accounts

When we began the program, we expected to be able to quickly set up direct deposits into the scholars bank accounts. What we found was that most scholars did not have bank accounts, and some of their parents did not, either. Obtaining social security numbers and other information necessary to set up payroll was also difficult in some cases, depending on custody situations and the facility of parents to fill out and return employment paperwork. To help, we obtained information on student accounts from a local lender and even looked into basic financial literacy classes for the scholars. Eventually all the scholars got paid, but the process took much longer than expected.

Lack of Understanding of the Church Year

As people deeply involved in the worship life of the Episcopal Church, we can forget how different a liturgical celebration of Holy Week seems to many. One of our biggest surprises was that only one scholar showed up for Good Friday services. We had talked about it with the scholars and sent home information. Nevertheless, amid all the preparation for music and the services, somehow an understanding that after being there Thursday evening, everyone should come back Friday, as well as Saturday and Sunday, did not happen. Where that information got lost, or if parents or scholars decided that was too much time at work in a week, we don't know. In the future, we may need to spend more than one formation class on Holy Week and its liturgies.

Looking Forward

St. John's is fully committed to moving forward with a second year of the musical scholars program. We expect many of our current scholars to return, and are hoping to have eight participants for the 2019-2020 school year. Toward the end of the school year, we reached out to our scholars' current school district, and may reach out to one other area high school choir program if we still have space.

We intend to keep the basic programming the same, both in terms of the formation hour and the choir rehearsal and worship components. We will have students take the same spiritual well-being and practice surveys to track development and hopefully gain a large enough sample over time to see if the program has statistically significant results. We also hope to improve the program by expanding three components.

First, we have seen that for some of our scholars, their musical abilities exceed their musical exposure. We hope to take them either as a cohort or as part of larger parish outings to events such as Broadway musicals in Pittsburgh or Cleveland and operas and other high-quality classical musical offerings by Youngstown State University.

Second, now that we have a first class of scholars with experience at St. John's, we plan to integrate them more in capacities beyond choral voices. We have scholars that play cello, flute, and other band and orchestra instruments. Utilizing those gifts more frequently advances the goals of our program and is of benefit to the congregation and the scholars. We also plan to find

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more opportunities for solos, duets, and small ensemble parts in anthems, psalms, and other music.

Third, as the scholars become more familiar with our hymnody, we hope to draw on their preferences and perspectives as we shape our music program going forward. Young people who are touched by good music and liturgical worship are the people we are most prepared to reach with the gospel. Listening to our scholars will help us answer that call more effectively.

Financial Report

The total cost of our first program year was \$9,589. This amount was less than we expected because we had fewer scholars participate. \$8,507 went to the stipends we paid to the musical scholars, \$847 paid for their choir robes, and \$235 was spent on other expenses. Other administrative costs, staff costs for the rector and music director, music, and office expenses were all provided by St. John's

We were blessed to receive a St. Stephen's Outreach Grant from the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania for \$7,500. Additionally we received donations totalling \$1,304 from individuals, a collection taken at Diocesan Convention, and Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Corry. St. John's contributed \$785 toward direct project costs, as well as over \$9,000 in estimated in-kind costs.

Our expectation is that with more scholars and an earlier start date, the direct program costs for the 2019-2020 program year will come to \$18,500.

Addenda for the Gathering of Leaders

Year Two

- Year Two of the St. John's Musical Scholars began in the fall of 2019 and was cut short by the Pandemic in March 2020.
- Four musical scholars returned from the previous year and three new scholars joined the program.
- The growth in faith formation and musicality continued.
- Two musical scholar families began to attend St. John's on a regular basis.
- A local Presbyterian congregation began musical scholars program, focusing on students from a different school district. Their program was set up somewhat differently, since they did not have a weekday choir practice. Their entire project, including the formation time, occurred on Sunday morning/early afternoon.
- In the fall of 2021, another Episcopal congregational in our dioceses was preparing to launch a musical scholars program once pandemic restrictions allowed it.

Spiritual Well-Being Survey

The Spiritual Well-Being Survey used comes from a Spiritual Well-Being Scale designed by C.W. Ellison and R.F. Paloutzian. More information, as well as its questions and design, can be found in an article by Craig W. Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being: Conceptualization and Measurement" in the Journal of Psychology and Theology, 1983, Vol. 11, No. 4, 330-340. For more details or a copy of the Google Form set up for this program, please contact Adam Trambley.

Formation Class Design

Our formation classes were designed specifically for the musical scholars. We began by providing information necessary for them to understand and participate fully in the liturgy and life of the church. Multiple sessions included going through elements of the liturgy, the difference between leading music in worship and performing, walking through and understanding the liturgical space, and learning generally about the church. (Expect them to take a lot more time looking through the vestment closet than you originally allotted.) We found we had to go a lot farther back to the basics than we had expected.

After the basics of being in a worshipping choir, we experimented with different curricula and programs to introduce basic Christian concepts. The best resource we found were Alpha Youth videos. They were engaging, sparked good conversation, and the scholars related well to them.