

EXCITING MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS!!!

Val Bartlein

Anyone that has ever heard me speak about music for worship knows that I am a passionate believer that all talents come from God and all talents are worthy of praising God! I welcome all talents and forms of expression to my prayer and have worked to provide a wide range of expression to our collective musical prayer life at Immanuel. We have a regular diet of traditional hymns accompanied by both the traditional organ and the non-traditional, MIDI-orchestral organ. We regularly offer more contemporary music accompanied by the keyboard and more recently by Mike Smith on guitar. This last year we were able to:

- offer some classical, picked guitar accompaniments (thanks to Mike's hard work),
- return to the old tradition of 4-part acappella singing several times,
- combine choir and bell choir together for Easter for the first time ever from what I've been told!

We have welcomed Jenn Traversa on flute, Russ Jandt on sax, John St. Louis on trumpet and numerous times we have welcomed outside talents on instruments that we don't have from within our congregation – most especially on drums and percussion.

That is why I am so excited by our latest development for this year! Many of you got to meet and hear Ryan Naperkowski, a Streamwood High School Senior, when he played guitar at Immanuel UCC last spring for our Easter Cantata. Well, he (and his family) was so moved by the musical experience and by the welcoming nature of our church that he approached me earlier this summer to play more regularly at Immanuel. Ryan also invited his friend, Jeff Dewbray, also a Streamwood High School Senior to join us; Jeff is a very good drummer! Both Ryan and Jeff live in the neighborhood immediately behind Immanuel where many of our church members live.

Ryan and Jeff joined Mike Smith (guitarist & A/V) and me to form a praise band, and we played for our first worship at Immanuel at the 9:00 am Service on Sept. 26th. If you weren't there, you won't believe how good we sound, and you really won't believe the enthusiasm and music that comes out of these fine young guys! Their excitement for what we are doing reminds me of why I so passionately support the idea that all talents are welcome in the praise of God! These two young guys have agreed to play for our worship once a month, and we will be scheduling this for the third or fourth Sunday of each month this year!

Just so you know, that means they will be fitting us into a schedule that is already quite full! Both Jeff and Ryan are seniors at Streamwood High School, and both of them work as many hours as they can at the AMC 30 theatre in Barrington. Ryan is also class president and on the football team! Yet, they want to give the time for rehearsals and extra practice time to be ready to play for our worship! They are truly great young guys!

When I brought the news of this opportunity to the Worship Committee in our Sept. 12th meeting, everyone was thrilled to welcome and feature young people leading our worship. Nancy Madsen said, "This is such an incredible outreach opportunity! It is great we have high school students wanting to do this!" And Pat Diehn recounted a story from last spring (when Ryan first played guitar for the Easter cantata) where Ryan was playing our church music on his guitar on his deck at home...with a bunch of his friends listening! She said it was neat to witness it!

I hope that you will join me in welcoming Ryan and Jeff to our worship and help me make them feel welcome! Also, don't be surprised if you see a few new faces in our gathering as their families and friends visit as well. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me like always.