

Report to Synod 2023:

Co-opted Synod Member for Church Music

1. Introduction

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I am a member of the Johannesgemeinde in Pretoria East and was recently approached by the NELCSA Church Council, requesting me to succeed Mrs Connie Ortmann as the co-opted synod member for church music. I gladly accepted this task, as I have been involved in church music since my youth,

- Singing in diverse church choirs since 1981,
- Serving as a congregational organist since 1988 in Hermannsburg, Windhoek, Stellenbosch / Somerset West, Bloemfontein and Pretoria (St. Peter's and, since 2010, Johannesgemeinde),
- Having played in the Johannesgemeinde Brass Band for several years,
- Having taken over from Walter Johannes as choir conductor in 2018/19, and
- Since the NELCSA Choir Festival earlier this year, serving in the Church Choir Association as Leader of the Northern Region and Deputy Director of the Association.

2. Matters for Synod's attention

Given my recent co-opting, I have little to report to Synod, other than to refer you to the reports submitted by

- The Church Choir Association (Pastor Udo Lütge)
- The Brass Band Association (Egmont Ottermann) and
- The IMPACT Music Ministry (Pastor Manfred Müller-Nedebock)

Please feel free to engage me on these reports, and all matters relating to church music, during Synod.

3. Closing thoughts

My work as church musician, chorister and conductor, both in my local congregation and in the Church Choir Association, has made me keenly aware that church music can touch people and build bridges in a manner that the spoken word cannot always achieve. On the other hand, church music should not serve merely as a concert for enjoyment, but rather subject itself to be a servant of the Gospel. NELCSA's church music, diverse as it may be, should therefore always serve the greater purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ from our uniquely Lutheran vantage point.

Mark Rohwer, 7 September 2023