

Music Minister

To Father Michael Ralph, the Wardens, the Vestry, and members of St Mark's Episcopal Church, Westhampton Beach:

My role as Minister of Music at St Mark, Westhampton Beach began on January 14th, 2018. From the very first, I've felt warmly received and respected. Indeed, I've already begun to form treasured friendships as I settle into the job as your organist.

Since January, the choir's ranks have increased from the 12 original members. Two persons, Diane Feil and Norma-Jeanne Okula, have joined as permanent members, and three members of the congregation, Aimee Ralph, Tim Feil, and Sandy Wyman, sing with us on an as-able (or, in Tim's case, as-threatened) basis.

On a 'good' Sunday – meaning, a Sunday with full attendance, including our non-robing friends – we could have as many as 17 souls in the choir stalls.

Two additional others have expressed interest in joining but have yet to follow up, however I remain hopeful.

The invitation to any other members of the congregation to sing with the choir on an as-able basis still stands. All this means is that any interested person could let me know by the Sunday prior that they'd like to sing with us the following Sunday. I'll immediately add her/his email address to our group list. On Wednesdays, I record and upload audio files of the upcoming Sunday's music to YouTube, and send a group email to the choir listing all the music – hymns, psalm, and anthem – with links to the practice files I've uploaded.

Since the choir meets only on Sunday mornings, this little method gives everyone the opportunity to have their own private rehearsal(s) prior to our performing at Mass, and also renders scheduling for would-be part-time choristers from the congregation a non-issue.

Isn't technology wonderful?

In the 19 weeks since that joyful start in January, the choir and I have performed 7 hymn anthems (selection from The Hymnal 1982), 11 choral pieces, 7 of them completely new (meaning, new to them, and to me), and six of those new ones since Easter; added to which, at the beginning of Lent, we also introduced the singing of a Responsorial Psalm between the readings.

We've certainly hit the ground running.

My hope for this first year is to build on the momentum we've already achieved; to continue to encourage members of the congregation to sing with us; and to continue to rack my brains to come up with ideas to make our worship experience at St Mark more meaningful.

Thank you all, again, for making this experience such a pleasant one. It is my prayer that my presence here at St Mark continues to bear at least some good fruit, and that the music we have yet to make

together as a congregation does the job it's supposed to do – that is, aiding and supporting us all in our walk with God.

Humbly submitted,

Kurt Colin Daisley