

# NOTES FROM A MEETING OF THE MUSIC FOCUS GROUP FOR ST JAMES

Wednesday 6 October, 6:30pm

## PRESENT

Chas Laurence Dulce Johnston, Tim Housel, Ken MacKenzie, Kasia Waldegrave, David Dobson, Paula Baynes, Bloss Perry, Allen Sutton, Heather Easting, Bron Robertson, Amanda Wills, Paulene Gibbons, Helen Willberg. (and Gary)

These notes have been interpolated into the original draft. Discussion from the meeting is in italics. [Blue additions come from emails from David and Ken.](#)

Givens:

Music can enhance any service by:

- Allowing everyone (*congregation as well as “musicians”*) to contribute – by singing the songs and hymns they love, sharing words and ideas: some that have been handed down from the ages and some that are newly created today
- Creating a worshipful atmosphere
- Connecting with our heritage
  - *Our congregation is made up of people with a wide variety of cultural heritages – how can we reflect that?*
  - *Important to remember that we are part of a Three Tikanga church:*
  - *The Maori Lord’s Prayer: some find it very meaningful, others find singing in a language they don’t understand gets in the way (some churches give the option of everyone saying the Lord’s Prayer in their own native language).*
  - *Important to provide translations of foreign texts so that people know what they are singing. Use more songs in te reo Maori and Samoan? Tongan?*

We have the resources of the organ, ([note that it is the console of the organ that is moveable to a small extent](#)) piano, keyboard, guitars, potentially a drumkit, and people with skills in playing them. We have singers.

- *There are also many other musicians in the congregation and community that we can call upon. Provide printed music for those who want it.*
- *Important to have a bass guitar in the mix*
- *Have a roster of keyboard players*
- *Some people don’t like having the organ and band instruments playing together [both organists are willing and able, but there is a need for practice together, and sound balancing, including the person at the sound desk.](#)*

Jean has a collection of musical material that we can explore as new to everyone – though some has already been used in the 9am service

- *This includes music from the Taize and Iona traditions*
- *Ken suggests the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Light Church Music Group, who wrote (‘60’s swinging’) new tunes to existing hymn words.*

Aims:

The aim is to use all of our music resources to help create a new service which will be neither a 9 o’clock nor a 10:30 service but contain the best of both

- *Important that we don’t just throw things out! Balance of old and new.*
- *Ask congregations of both 9am and 10:30am services what hymns and songs they cannot bear to lose. (Draw up our own list first????)*

## Questions:

- How best to engage all comers, of all ages (implications for liturgy)
  - *We need to think very carefully about anything that could be a barrier to newcomers to the church*
  - *We should ask the youth what they want if we want to include them better*
  - *To attract young people, should we be looking at music from the '80s, '90s, and 2000s? Contemporary Christian bands?*
  - *We need to be thinking about balance and the experience of the service as a whole (don't want too much music, or too little!)*
  - *Don't make the service too long*
- How to provide both familiarity and the adventure of the new in accessible ways
  - *There are lots of options for different places in the service to have music – something to explore with the LITURGY group*
  - *Having a more flexible or “casual” service actually means more work than having a fixed service*
- What is the best set-up for the guitars and keyboard? (To be explored with the SPACE group)
  - *Need to think about technical side of things*
  - *Can the band instruments have a permanent set-up in place?*
  - *Sound check before services?*
  - *Training necessary for people on sound*

## Other things that came up:

- *Possibility of having a CAMP, say at the end of January, for the 'Music Group' to learn some new music and get used to working together*
- *Importance of rehearsals: Acknowledgment that new repertoire would require more rehearsal, (see note about 'flexible' service above) and the need to keep standards high. One possible solution could be having the usual weekly rehearsals, for the motets and other choral things, such as evensong, and fortnightly as part of this, a practice with everyone to look at music for the coming two weeks.*
- *On Sundays, (timing will need experimentation?) 45 minutes before the service a soundcheck in the church, then a sing-through in the choir vestry.*
- *A roster for group members, so that there are opportunities for individuals to have a break sometimes*
- *Paula, Heather, and Peter to meet monthly to choose music*
- *Keep some services “traditional”: Evensong, 9 lessons and carols. High mass still a possibility.*

## Looking ahead:

- 15 October workshop for all focus groups to come together and report to each other, and to learn a few new pieces of music with everyone present.

Next Music focus group meeting: Wednesday 19 October 6:30pm – start planning first service: come prepared to make a broad list of music to be retained?

## Further meetings:

- Wednesday 2 November 6:30pm
- Wednesday 16 November 6:30pm

## Precis of NOTES FROM A MEETING OF THE MUSIC FOCUS GROUP FOR ST JAMES

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- *There is much musical material that we can explore as new to everyone This includes music from the Taize and Iona traditions*

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Questions:

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  - *We need to be thinking about balance and the experience of the service as a whole (don’t want too much music, or too little!)*
  - *Don’t make the service too long*
- How to provide both familiarity and the adventure of the new in accessible ways
  - *Explore different places in the service to have music (LITURGY group)*
  - *NB Having a more flexible or “casual” service actually means more work than having a fixed service*
- What is the best set-up for the guitars and keyboard? (explore with SPACE group)
  - *Can the band instruments have a permanent set-up in place?*
  - *Soundcheck before services?*
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Other things that came up:

- *Possibility of having a CAMP, say at the end of January, for the ‘Music Group’ to learn some new music and get used to working together*
- *Importance of rehearsals*
- *On Sundays: 40? 30? minutes before the service a soundcheck in the church, then a sing-through in the choir vestry.*
- *Keep some services “traditional”: Evensong, 9 lessons and carols. High mass still a possibility.*