

Schola Cantorum: Music for Children

By Paul S. Jones, Organist and Music Director

From the Middle Ages, the church was the center of musical, religious, and even general education. Churches had schools of singing called *schola cantorum* to teach music to choir boys and men. In the twentieth century, the church's role in the music education of children waned. However, according to Scripture, music is one of the primary expressions of Christian faith—a daily part of spiritual life. Singing is one of the few known eternal activities (Isaiah 6; Revelation 4, 5). If we as Christians do not have something about which to sing, who does? And if Christians do not teach their children to sing, who will?

We must teach young Christians “to sing and to make music for the Lord.” Children who can read and perform music independently will be better equipped for meaningful, life-long participation in worship. A child's musical aptitude is formed by the age of nine years, and the benefits of music in learning development, memory, abstract thought, math, and sports are well documented. If we are to encourage a modern Reformation in worship and Christian living, we must begin by teaching the next generation.

Therefore, Tenth is introducing a comprehensive program to develop musical literacy in children. Inherent in the program will be a biblical view of music in worship, an historical perspective of church music, and a dynamic application of musical skills through choral ensembles. Learning a hymn each month will complement the Scripture memory program in place in the Bible School. In *Schola Cantorum*, children will learn melody, rhythm, hymnody, music appreciation, biblical truth, teamwork, discipline, analytical thinking, and how to sing.

The objectives of the Tenth *Schola Cantorum* are:

- To develop the children's musical literacy for the purpose of participating in individual and corporate worship through music.
- To develop the children's singing voices through training in correct vocal production and to increase their enjoyment of music through all aspects of the program.
- To develop the children's understanding of the roles of music in worship as taught in Scripture.
- To deepen the children's comprehension and love of hymnody.
- To deepen the children's knowledge of Scripture and the Lord Jesus Christ through the texts of the songs that constitute the program curriculum.

Schola Cantorum will commence Sunday, September 15, 2003. Start time is 6:15 pm and the program will run concurrent with evening worship services through May. Children are to be dropped off at 315 S. 17th Street and will remain there until retrieved by their parents. Activities will include tonal and rhythm classes, choir, and a snack break. There is no fee. Parents will register each child, and the child's regular attendance is necessary. A staff of professional music educators, all members of Tenth Church, will be coordinated by Dr. Kristyn Kuhlman under the authority of the Music Director and the Family Life Commission.

Participating in the *Schola Cantorum* may mean a change in family Sunday schedules, but we sincerely hope that such an important opportunity for your children will be viewed favorably. It will take commitment, but the rewards (spiritual, musical, social, and intellectual) will be great. Parents, look for a letter to arrive later this month. Congregation, if you can contribute toward the start-up costs of this program, donations will be gratefully received. Make checks payable to Tenth Presbyterian Church, memo line: “*Schola Cantorum*.” s.D.g.