

St. George's Anglican Church
Advent IV, 2007

Notes about Music from the Console
[Not really, but it sounds impressive]

1. **Thank You!**

I was absolutely delighted by your singing of that inspiring Swedish folk tune to "Rejoice, rejoice, believers," last Sunday. Thank you for your wonderful response to my request. Size for size, you come out way ahead of any congregation I've ever known. It is a great pleasure to hear you. Thank you.

2. **Christ's ("Christmas Eve") Mass, Monday, 10:40 PM**

Why the unusual time? Normally, the service would be preceded by organ music and would begin on the hour. I have mentioned some time ago that in all music literature, there is relatively little music for organ. Oh yes, we have hundreds of Christmas carols, hymns and songs but not much organ music per se, and only a few people would recognize what there is as being for Christmas. This year I have tempered the organ prelude by the addition of some singing - the ever-popular, "O Holy Night," and the pretty little Polish carol, "Infant Holy," just before the Mass begins at 11 o'clock. Please plan to arrive BY 10:40 PM, and if circumstances make you later, please be very quiet during the singing. After "Infant Holy," very quiet organ music will lead without announcement or other interruption into the opening hymn, "Once in royal David's city."

3. **Processional Hymn, 236**

One of Cecil Frances Alexander's children once asked her, "Tell us about Christmas," so, as she did for most of their questions about religion, she wrote them a poem. "Once in royal David's city," is a beautiful Christmas hymn, simple but unusual in that it moves from King David's Bethlehem, through the life and work of our Lord, then directly into the only true goal of our life - "...We shall see Him; but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high." The Bulletin lists the singing of the verses. Verses 1-4 will be sung in candlelight by the choir only, then with full lighting, the congregation joins in at verse 5. I hope that like me, you find it one of the most beautiful ways to begin a Christmas service.

4. **Recessional Hymn 12**

I mentioned in other years that "O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem," is best interpreted not in a literal sense, but as meaning, guide your thoughts to all that is symbolized by the gift of God's Son in Bethlehem. Thus, as you leave the chapel, take the message of good will with you to your home and friends. In that way, it is the perfect hymn for a close to the Mass. [I know at least a couple of thousand hymns and can play more than 700 by memory. I often say that I have no favorite, but perhaps the fact is that I like this hymn more than whatever is in second place. Venite adoremus Dominum!] It is Christmas: we shall sing all six verses - save enough breath for the final verse. It is a birthday greeting to our Lord Jesus Christ: we shall sing an "Amen."

5. **AFTER the Recessional Hymn**

As usual, organ music will continue from the Amen. After the candles have been extinguished and you have made your closing devotions, please make your way out of the chapel. **THE CHOIR WILL BE SINGING ONE OR TWO CAROLS AS YOU LEAVE BUT PLEASE, ON THIS OCCASION, DO NOT REMAIN SEATED NOR STILL TO LISTEN TO THEM, AS A GOODLY NUMBER OF THEM WOULD LIKE TO BE HOME BEFORE 5 AM. JUST PROCEED ON YOUR WAY OUT OF THE CHAPEL**

It is only fitting that in concluding I should be politically correct:

Merry Christmas!
God bless us, every one.