

FAQs for Musicians at COH

Worship Time: 11 AM until November 30, on which Sunday we're moving to 10:30. The building is open ½ our prior but can be earlier as needed.

Preludes

The musician chooses the pieces for this. Ideally, they'd be timed to be finished right at the moment when worship is to begin. There's no expectation that every piece will be "church music," but there is a fondness for familiar melodies even if arranged in new ways. Some people appreciate "pop music" but a light touch on that is best.

Piano or Organ?

We've got two wonderful instruments, and both have their fans among the congregants. So, you, the musician, should play whichever is your preference. If you want to play both, remember that they're not close together in the sanctuary, the organ in the gallery at the back of the sanctuary and the piano on the main floor in the front of the sanctuary, so about as far apart as can be.

Organ Challenges

The organ can feel far removed from the congregation. It's difficult to hear their singing so a firm sense of the proper pace for the hymn is important. If you want visual contact with worship leadership, arrange for that ahead of time, adjusting the mirror on the console so you can see the pulpit or the podium, whichever its decided would be best.

Hymnals

We sing from one of two hymnals, either the *New Century* (NCH) or the *Pilgrim* (PH), usually choosing all three hymns from one hymnal for a Sunday. Wherever there's printed an "Amen," we sing it. This is usually in the *Pilgrim Hymnal*, seldom in the *New Century Hymnal*, and always at the Doxology.

Hymn Details

- **Announcing the hymns:** The liturgist or Liz will introduce the hymn, usually by number only.
- **Introduction:** The last two stanzas of a four-stanza hymn will usually suffice for getting the congregation ready to sing together. There are exceptions to this, of course, as in a hymn with two or three stanzas, or when there's a coda. When in doubt, ask Liz.
- **Amens:** If printed (usually in the PH), play the "Amen." If not (usually in the NCH), leave it off.
- **Pacing:** We have the full NCH on CDs. Consult these for good pacing, if that puts your mind at ease. They're kept at the back of the sanctuary beside the sofa along with a CD player. If we're in the PH, ask Liz about any pacing questions.

Extra Service Music

- **Communion:** We gather in this sacrament on the first Sunday of each month. There are two periods when a piano or organ solo can be played, during the serving of the

bread and again during the serving of the cup. These two might feature the same piece, played twice, and they tend to last no more than 5 minutes.

- **Choir:** If interested, we could also call a “pick-up choir,” asking people to come to church early (30 minutes? 45 minutes?) to learn a piece to sing during worship. This is if the musician feels comfortable directing singers as well.
- **Maureen O’Flynn:** Our artist-in-residence, a soprano who sings in worship once a month, comes with her own accompanist and can offer her piece during the offering, making for one less piece of service music from you, or as an anthem earlier in the service.

Offering

This is another time for a solo piece and shouldn’t be longer than three minutes. Except during some special services, it doesn’t take us long at all to collect the offering.

Doxology

We sing the doxology every week, usually to tune #780 in the NCH (#515 in the PH). On Easter Sunday, we sometimes use NCH #27 (PH #12) for the doxology, good for all its extra “Alleluias,” which have been unsung during Lent and Holy Week.

Closing Song

Every week we close our worship with one verses of *Amazing Grace*. For intro, use the last phrase of this very familiar song.

Postlude

As with the prelude, this is up to you, and can last any length of time. The congregation will likely move to coffee hour during this piece so don’t take it personally if people seem not to be listening.

Extra Services

We have special services that involve music on Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Maudy Thursday and possibly Good Friday.

Wild Cards: Things you’d only get at Church on the Hill.

During winter, we worship down the hill at the chapel (55 Main Street.) We’re there January-March, coming back to the Meeting House on the hill on Palm Sunday or on the first Sunday of April, whichever comes first. There’s no organ there, only a piano.

We don’t heat the Meeting House during the week so it can be very cold there in the weeks before we leave for the chapel. If you mean to rehearse on the organ during the week, it’s worth knowing that it’s warmest there on Saturday afternoons (after we’ve turned the heat on for worship the next day) and Sunday afternoons (while it’s still warm from worship that morning.)