

A special welcome to our new Director of Music Mr. James (Jim) Riggs. Jim has been active in church music since he served as organist for his home congregation in Bloomsburg, PA, while he was in high school. When he moved to Lancaster to pursue his profession of Speech-Language Pathology, he became active in both the Lancaster chapter of the American Guild of Organists and the Lancaster Opera Company, which ignited a life-long passion for singing and performing. In his work at several different churches, he has led youth groups and servant events, drama groups, handbell choirs, praise and worship teams, adult and teen voice choirs, coordinated dance ensembles and concert series, and conducted major choral works and opera with orchestra. Jim met his wife Saralee during opera rehearsals, and together with their daughter Emily, they both currently are soloists with Bel Canto Lyric Opera of Philadelphia, under the direction of Marianne Casiello, retired faculty member of Curtis Institute.

When asked about his continued dedication to church music, Jim says that he believes in the power of music to enhance the Word. Not only does choir participation enrich the worship service, he reminds us that participation in music rehearsals is actually a service of the church TO the individual participant's spiritual growth, since during the week the singer has melodies and lyrics tucked away in his memory. He feels it is his responsibility to pick music that 'clicks' and is memorable, so the musician has a store of songs to carry with him between rehearsals. Participating in choir is also a way to connect with a small group of the church, to make lasting friendships, and to provide and receive support. And lastly, Jim sees participation in choir as a way to experience group voice lessons in a fun, stimulating atmosphere, where we can apply what we learn immediately—speech therapists who are singers are trained to promote healthy and vital singing, and he looks forward to working at Faith.