

*Called to Serve*  
**The LDS Organist**  
AGO Organ Workshop • Saturday, April 26, 2008  
presented by Florence Hawkinson

And all this for the benefit of the church of the living God, that every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents, yea, even an hundred fold, to be cast into the Lord's storehouse, to become common property of the whole church.  
*Doctrine & Covenants 82:18*

Verily I say unto you, behold how great is your calling.

*Doctrine & Covenants 112:33*

Inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings. *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, pg. ix.

A member of the bishopric calls and sets apart a ward organist or pianist to provide prelude and postlude music and accompaniment for hymns at sacrament meeting and other ward meetings as requested. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Section 14.*

If you are called upon to play a church service, it is a greater honor than if you were to play a concert on the finest organ in the world...Thank God each time when you are privileged to sit before the organ console and assist in the worship of the Almighty. *Albert Schweitzer*

Standard musical elements in church meetings include: Prelude and Postlude Music, Congregational Singing, and Special Musical Selections. This means that the ward organist is an active participant (in front of the congregation) for 20-30 minutes (25-38% of the meeting) on a weekly basis.

Therefore he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings.

*Mosiah 8:18*

Some ways that we can become a great benefit to our fellow ward members:

- Create a feeling of reverence and order
- Unify congregation
- Preach the gospel
- Add interest to the meeting
- Invite the Spirit of the Lord
- Encourage others in their musical endeavors
- Be an example of cheerful service

Neglect not the gift which is in thee.

*I Timothy 4:14*

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won't feel secure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others. *Nelson Mandela, Inaugural Speech, 1994*

Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power. *Doctrine & Covenants 123:17*

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Does the Church have a policy that only hymns can be used as music in sacrament meeting?**

"The hymns of the Church are the basic music for worship services and are standard for congregational singing. However, in addition to the hymns, other appropriate selections may be used for prelude and postlude music, choir music, and special musical selections" (First Presidency letter, Nov. 7, 2002).

2. **Who makes the final decision regarding music for Church meetings?**

"Stake presidencies and bishoprics determine whether musical selections or instruments are suitable for a particular meeting" ("Music," section 14 of the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* [1998], 289).

3. **Should we just sing hymns familiar to our congregation?**

"In addition to using hymns already known and loved, members are encouraged to become acquainted with new or less familiar hymns. Try to achieve a good balance between familiar favorites and less well-known hymns" (*Hymns*, 381).

4. **Should we choose sacrament hymns only from the "Sacrament" section in the hymnbook's table of contents?**

Hymns throughout the hymnbook may be used as sacrament hymns if they follow this guideline: "The sacrament hymn should refer to the sacrament itself or to the sacrifice of the Savior" (*Hymns*, 380).

5. **Should we sing every verse of a hymn?**

"You need not feel compelled to sing all the verses of a hymn unless the message is otherwise incomplete. However, do not routinely shorten a hymn by singing just the first one or two verses. Singing the verses printed below the music is encouraged" (*Hymns*, 381).

6. **May we stand to sing the national anthem? How about standing for the intermediate hymn?**

"Members may stand for national anthems in church meetings according to local custom and priesthood direction" (*Hymns*, 381). "An intermediate hymn provides an opportunity for congregational participation and may relate to the subject of the talks presented in the meeting. The congregation may stand during this hymn as appropriate" (*Hymns*, 380).

7. **Is there an official list of "banned" or "approved" music or composers for sacrament meeting?**

No. No official list of "banned" or "approved" selections or composers exists. Members and priesthood leaders are expected to review the general principle-based guidelines and then, with the guidance of the Spirit, apply the guidelines to a particular circumstance, adjusting to the occasional exception as appropriate. "Music in Church meetings should help members worship, feel the sacred spirit of the Sabbath, and feel the spirit of revelation" ("Music," 289). In keeping with these guidelines, music for sacrament meetings should be chosen and performed with the intent of promoting worship, rather than bringing attention to the performance itself.

8. **May we use hymns from other denominations for special selections?**

Yes. However, musical texts should be doctrinally correct (see "Music," 289).

9. **May we use classical music for special selections?**

"In addition to the hymns, other appropriate selections may be used for prelude and postlude music, choir music, and special musical selections" (First Presidency letter, Nov. 7, 2002). "Much sacred music that is suitable for concerts and recitals is not appropriate for a Latter-day Saint worship service" ("Music," 289). In keeping with these guidelines, music for sacrament meetings should be chosen and performed with the intent of promoting worship, rather