

## Is There Music in a Music Library?

Dr. David Cherwien, at the January 2026 Winter Retreat, used this analogy in his “Venturing Beyond the Page” session: “I once saw Alice Parker hold up a sheet of music to her ear, and said ‘I don’t hear anything.’ Indeed - the page just provides us with some symbols and reminders about how to get to the real thing - making music that is unique to that moment - even if composed long ago.”<sup>1</sup>

What about the now over 60,000 pieces of music for congregations, choirs, and organs in the CMI Sacred Music Libraries? Is this really music? We think a lot about this at CMI.



- It is music as it is translated into sound
- It is music when it inspires a congregation to worship
- It is music when it enables a choir to find their voices as worship offerings.
- It is music when a spoken worship is transformed by the sounds of singing

A recent Christian Century article, “A Great Library of Witnesses” speaks of a scholar, Stephanie Saldaña in Gaza, who was awarded a fellowship to do research in a distant library. She found healing and beauty as she was surrounded by others in the books she read who had lived through war and survived.<sup>2</sup>

So it is with a library of “music.” As Hebrews 12:1 says, “Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” We are surrounded by centuries of authors and composers who have written deep texts and beautiful music, including those today, who allow us to share in their riches as we translate symbols on a page into sound for our prayers through song. What is it about the CMI library that surrounds us with a “great library of witnesses” to the music beyond our particular congregations? What are some frequently asked questions about the CMI libraries?

1. *Our congregation and choir are small. Do you have anything for us?* Yes! Music in the CMI libraries can be searched by unison to multiple voicings to find just the right resources. Hundreds of options are available for helping small congregations interpret corporate song in sound.
2. *Our church already has an extensive library so we don’t need more music.* OK. Is all that music cataloged and searchable by liturgical day, scripture, theological topics? CMI libraries can give music already on hand its fullest potential by matching it to themes in any one worship setting.

*(continued on page 2)*

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from email message from David Cherwien, March 26, 2026.

<sup>2</sup> Saldaña, Stephanie. “A Great Library of Witnesses.” Chicago, IL. Christian Century, February 2026, p. 32-3.

## Is There Music in a Music Library? (continued)

3. *Do you have music of many kinds?* The libraries are a comprehensive collection of sacred music from all periods of history to the present that combines the finest texts and music into a coherent, transcendent whole. A wide range of composers, authors, and compositional styles are included.
4. *With thousands of titles how can I find music right for our congregation?* CMI staff offer personalized Zoom calls with members to identify search criteria specific to their resources and needs that gives them the tools to navigate the search process to get what they want quickly.
5. *What about copyright? Does CMI have music for download?* Yes and no. In designing the libraries CMI worked carefully with publishers to respect copyright ownership. The result is that every entry has a sample PDF of music but not the entirety of a piece. There ARE some complete downloadable copies of music where CMI owns the copyright, and indications of music in the public domain are included.
6. *Is all the music in the CMI libraries old?* No! The most recently published sacred music of major publishers is entered upon receipt at CMI. Of note is Dr. Mann's "Let Nothing Ever Grieve You", a setting of Brahms Op. 30 with a new English text. It is appropriate for upcoming Sundays, eight different theological themes, and five different scriptures. (See related article below.)
7. *How can my congregation afford CMI resources?*  
Many resources from CMI are free. Regular membership is \$75 per year which includes access to the libraries. Discounts are available to members of AGO, ACDA, NPM, AAM, AFPC – your musician will know how to interpret the acronyms!  
No one is ever turned away for inability to pay.

Back to our original question: Is there music in the CMI music libraries? The answer is a resounding YES if you and your congregation will turn it into sound!

Best to you for worship with transcendent music,

Dr. Charlotte Kroeker



## New Release from MorningStar Music

Dr. Robert Mann, Senior Resource Librarian at CMI, adds to his previous publication of the successful book on hymnody, *The Church Sings Its Faith*, with a new edition and English text of the Brahms Op. 30 anthem, "Let Nothing Ever Grieve You". Dr. Mann is familiar with the many editions of the piece published in the twentieth century but found those English translations of the German text to be unsatisfactory. "The existing translations are archaic to contemporary ears, using language from another era that sounds unfamiliar to churchgoers today. I wanted a translation for English-speaking choirs and congregations that is easier to sing and understand."

This new edition is published by MorningStar Music # MSM-50-2156, 2026, as part of the Duke Chapel Series edited by Dr. Zebulon Highben.



## Music in Christian Worship WRSP 70970/80970: A Graduate Course with Brite Divinity School

June 22 - July 03, 2026

*For three hours graduate credit or audit (non-credit)*

A foundational course for clergy and musicians about the church's music, covering theological underpinnings in various traditions, various worship streams and how music relates to them, congregational song, choral song, music leadership, language, service planning, and staff relationships. Lectures, discussion, oral and written reports, individual projects, Daily Prayer Services using liturgy from the offices and music/liturgy studied.

Prospectus, Course Outline, and more information available online:  
[churchmusicinstitute.org/events/music-in-christian-worship-course-2026](http://churchmusicinstitute.org/events/music-in-christian-worship-course-2026)

### Option 1

Enroll in the course for graduate credit through Brite Divinity School.

Deadline to submit their application online – **April 10, 2026**.

Tuition cost – \$1000 after CMI discount.

### Option 2

Audit the course as an individual through Church Music Institute.

Complete our application online by **May 15, 2026**.

\$400 member/\$500 non-member tuition fee due by June 1.

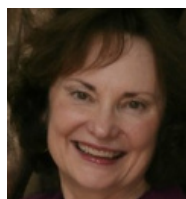
### Option 3

Audit the course as a clergy/musician team (2 people from the same congregation).

Complete our application online by **May 15, 2026**.

\$550 discounted rate for a clergy/musician team due by June 1.

## Course Professors



Dr. Charlotte Kroeker  
Organizing Professor



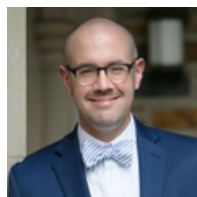
Dr. Christopher Anderson  
Colorado Springs, CO



Dr. Wilma Ann Bailey  
Indianapolis, IN



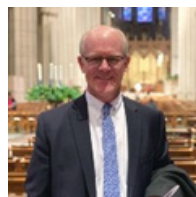
Dr. David Cherwien  
Minneapolis, MN



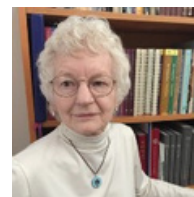
Dr. Zebulon M. Highben  
Durham, NC



Dr. Don Horisberger  
New Glarus, WI



Rev. Dr. Peter W. Marty  
Denver, CO



Dr. Gail Ramshaw  
Washington, D.C.

## Winter Retreat 2026 Recap

Attendees of the 2026 Winter Retreat from across the U.S. enjoyed in-depth sessions from our presenters, camaraderie with each other, and returned home with new ideas and resources for planning worship music in their churches. Singers from many different cities gathered to sing in a Hymn Festival at the conclusion of the retreat led by Drs. Cherwien and Highben.



*"I have never been so fulfilled with answers, and I haven't been here for 48 hours. Each session is carefully planned and intended to help fulfill God's work. There is something for every choir to fit the lectionary of every week of the year. Whether you are a choir director, organist, accompanist, a combination of all of them, there are answers here for you! I'm already planning my trip for 2027, and I still have two days left." - Phillip Schorg of Omaha, NE*

## Meet CMI's new Staff Member

Joel Bourdier is CMI's new Membership Coordinator and Administrator. He earned a B.M. in Vocal Performance and a M.M. in Choral Conducting from Stephen F. Austin State University. He brings 12 years of experience as a choir director and music theory teacher, a decade of singing in the finest choral groups in the DFW area, and has sung as a bass section leader at Highland Park Presbyterian Church since 2021. Joel has several years of administrative experience for music organizations, and finds meaningful work in supporting and encouraging people in their endeavors. Joel is first point of contact to help CMI members find information and resources. You can reach him at [JBourdier@churchmusicinstitute.org](mailto:JBourdier@churchmusicinstitute.org).



facebook: Church Music Institute

Instagram: @churchmusicinstitute



CMI is a proud partner of the American Choral Directors Association, The American Guild of Organists, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, and the American Federation Pueri Cantores.



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*Dedicated to the advancement of the best liturgical and sacred music for Christian worship, serving clergy, musicians, and congregants.*