



Tell Out My Soul

Music that Moves You

An Interview By the Very Rev.

Julia McCray Goldsmith

Everyone loves the hymn version of “Tell Out My Soul.” It’s just so singable, and also so central to how we think about church. Stewardship may be about nuts and bolts, but—like everything we do in church—it needs theological context. The Magnificat beautifully supports a generous theology. There is an innate beauty to what Mary is saying, but it is framed within an expectation of justice and equality. Her words are a Gospel imperative. Church music should always be like that: it should grab people where we are and take us to a new place. Through the music, the message gets into our souls and minds and hearts, where we can’t get rid of it.

I was a childhood church nerd who felt called to music ministry from a young age. I’ve been fortunate to have worked in many fabulous places, and each place opened up new horizons for me. I’ve had to be open to each parish and their traditions, which means that I was learning as much as I was teaching. I feel especially grateful to my home parish in in Kennewick, Washington. They took the risk of having me serve as their music director while I was still in high school!

Church musicians have a strange and mysterious gift. It can’t be seen, and people can’t always tell you what they’ve received, but I know that they do. All of our arts “tell out” what our bodies and souls are doing, but music has a pride of place. Alignment to the liturgy is what makes it principal. And because of this, music serves to deepen community and strengthen commitment. It builds energy around belonging to each other. If we’re not doing that as church musicians, then why are we doing it? Our work is to amplify the Gospel, lift people up, and bring them into the fold. tens.org



Questions for Reflection:

Music is one way that we tell story and align our words and actions, what are others that you have experienced or practice? How do you engage your creative efforts with your story?



After having served several parishes and cathedrals over the course of a half-century, **Bruce Neswick** now works in “semi-retirement” as the Artist-in-Residence at St. James by-the-Sea, La Jolla, California.



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