

Libby Harrison: Worship Committee/Dream Team/Music Ministry



How did you get connected to BUMC and how long have you been a member here? How has your faith grown in that time?

I've been a member at BUMC for almost 14 years. It all started with a wrong turn on a Saturday afternoon in Bethesda. I had just moved to the Silver Spring area and was in Bethesda for an event and got turned around trying to get home. The next natural place for me to turn around was at the church and I saw a big yellow banner advertising "Contemporary Worship at 8:45." While I hadn't been church shopping exactly, I was excited to find a Methodist church with a contemporary service (though not so excited about the 8:45 a.m. part!). So I came back the next morning for worship and was warmly greeted. I enjoyed the music, the message and was also excited to see a Sunday School class for young adults. Karen Kirwan personally showed me where the classroom was - and I quickly knew that I had found a home at BUMC. So in the end...that wrong turn was really a right one!

Over the past 14 years, my faith has grown through the various Sunday School classes and small groups; the many opportunities for service in the community and beyond (particularly with youth work camps); the various ways I get to share my gifts and talents and most importantly through the people at BUMC who have become my "God Family."

As a member of the Worship Committee you work with the pastors on a weekly basis. Tell us more about your role and what it entails.

As chair of the Worship committee, I work with the pastors to understand their vision and plan for worship. They identify the themes for sermon series or liturgical seasons and then I work with the worship committee to brainstorm ideas and create visuals that bring these themes to life - so that the congregation can be more engaged and connected in worship. We also help support our many volunteers who recruit people to serve as ushers, scripture readers and communion servers. We certainly have our busy seasons - namely Advent and Lent - where we help beautify the sanctuary with banners, flowers and other decor. Shameless plug: if you've thought about getting more involved - we'd love to have you as an usher, scripture reader or communion server or as extra hands when we beautify the sanctuary!

We've seen a number of creative altar displays and Christmas Children's Messages over the years. What are some of the most memorable requests you've received as a member of the Worship Committee?

This is one of the reasons why I love being a part of the Worship Committee - the chance to be creative and visually represent the themes or messages of the sermons. Some of the most memorable altar displays definitely include Children's Sabbath Sundays - we've done Legos, Dr. Seuss, Pokemon and Star Wars. And our most recent Stewardship Campaign theme "Leaving it All On the Field" allowed us to transition the altar each week from a football field (I actually went to Hope Depot to buy an astro-turf carpet!) to a soccer field and then a basketball court! I love how our pastors and the congregation embrace creativity in worship!

You are also a member of our Dream Team. What have you learned from that experience and how do you hope to see our church grow in the coming years?

I've enjoyed the honor of being a member of our Dream Team and having the opportunity to ask questions about "who we are", "why we're here" and "what we're called to do". I've learned how to faithfully ask questions and work with other members of the Dream Team to think broadly about what we want for our church. Personally, I'd love to see our church grow more in the ministries we're already doing and get people more involved by using their spiritual gifts. The church is a living body and works best when people actively participate, nurture and care for it.

On Sunday mornings you are often juggling your Worship Committee duties along with singing in the Praise Band, not to mention pitching in to help with anything and everything needed to help our Sunday Services run smoothly. Why is it important to you to be such an active member of our church and what advice would you share with someone who comes to worship on Sundays but wants to be more involved?

It can certainly feel like a juggling act on Sunday mornings - but I love the energy that it gives me (I need something to get me going at 8:00 a.m. on a Sunday!). For me, BUMC is such an important part of my life and has given so much to me, and so I want to give and participate as much as I can. I believe the more you participate, the more connected you become and the more you want to return and become part of the community here. The ways that my life and my faith are enriched and nurtured by this church community are innumerable. I thank God every day for getting me "lost" in Bethesda nearly 14 years ago, for now I'm found at BUMC.

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