

Basilica Staff

Welcoming and honoring those who serve on our parish staff

BY MAE DESAIRE

WELCOME

PATRICK SCHNEIDER

Director of Music

In August of 2023, we welcomed Patrick Schneider as the new Director of Music. Patrick served previously as the Associate Choir Director at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Houston, Texas.



What has been the most exciting thing so far about your new role as Music Director at The Basilica?

The single most exciting and gratifying thing so far has been the fast friendships and connections I've made among the choirs and the staff. I never anticipated having such a ready-and-waiting support network for me when I accepted this job. It's been an absolute lifesaver, especially when Elizabeth and I welcomed our first child mere days before the choir season was due

to begin in the fall. I am excited to deepen these connections and forge new friendships here in The Basilica community.

Beyond that, I am always thrilled to learn new repertoire, and, being an out-of-stater, there is a whole body of fantastic choral repertoire by Minnesota composers for me to get to know. That's been a fun project for me.

Do you have a favorite moment from a concert or liturgy so far?

I can't possibly choose just one, so here are a few:

— **At the beginning of the Cathedral Choir's collaboration concert** with the University of St. Thomas in December, we sang John Tavener's *The Lamb*, one of my favorite classic Christmas carols, immediately before *Dark Night of the Soul* by Ola Gjeilo. Both pieces are in E minor, which meant we could launch right into *Dark Night* without having to take the time to orient ourselves to a new pitch center. The transition from the slow, soft,

and deeply contemplative ending of *The Lamb* to the frenetic, awe-inspiring sense of momentum that begins *Dark Night* made for a particularly memorable moment.

— **The choral prelude to the 5 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass** with *Mundus and Juventus*: this half hour prelude was filled to the brim with choral music of all different styles and languages, some accompanied and some *a cappella*. It was a huge lift musically, and the singers showed up in full force and sang beautifully.

— ***Joy to the World* and the Hallelujah chorus** at the end of Christmas Day noon Mass: after the liturgical marathon of Midnight Mass and two Masses on Christmas Day, looking up from the podium and seeing the joy and energy in the faces of the Cathedral Choir members, who have been singing for hours with very little sleep, was an incredibly gratifying reminder of how lucky I am to have landed here at The Basilica.



What has been the most challenging?

The most challenging aspect would have to be planning for liturgies which I've never experienced before. Luckily, living in the age of livestreaming does help in this, a bit. Still, I always find it difficult to truly get a complete understanding of a special liturgy without experiencing it firsthand at least once, and that challenge is compounded at The Basilica by all our unique and wonderful traditions. Every liturgical season is a new adventure! But that is all part of the fun.

What are you most looking forward to with the Music programs at The Basilica?

At this point, I'm just excited to keep on learning and experiencing all that the liturgies at The Basilica have to offer. As I write this, Lent is just around the corner, with Holy Week hot on its heels, which of course comes with some of the most affecting choral music of the entire year. I'm very much looking forward to the extended choral prelude which the Schola Cantorum will offer on Palm Sunday before Vespers — we will sing some Lenten and

Passiontide favorites paired with lesser-known settings of the same texts, and I highly encourage everyone to attend. And I eagerly await my first Basilica *Tenebrae* service, about which I've heard so much.

NEW STAFF

RÁMOND MITCHELL

Coordinator of Liturgical Celebrations

Rámond joined The Basilica staff in January 2023 as the Coordinator of Liturgical Celebrations. Originally from The Bahamas, he graduated with a degree in Theology from Saint John's University before moving to London (UK). During his time in London, he worked as Parish Liturgist, then Director of Liturgy for Saint George-in-the-East Church. He continues to serve as an advisor to the Church of England's Church Buildings Council on contested heritage cases and policy with a focus on racial justice. Rámond has also been a dedicated cantor and psalmist at Westminster Cathedral in London. Rámond is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Theology and Ministry at Boston College.

TAYLOR LILES

Executive Assistant

Taylor joined The Basilica staff in 2023 as Executive Assistant, where she provides administrative support to the Pastor and Managing Director of Parish Operations. Her previous roles in the government, private, and non-profit sector have allowed her to serve her community in several different capacities, and she is excited to continue that work through The Basilica.

JOE CYBERT

Director of Safety & Security

Joe joined our staff as an independent contractor in 2023 to elevate our focus on safety and security. He is leading our team of staff and volunteers to implement strategic safety enhancements throughout The Basilica and the surrounding campus. Our goal is a 100% safe and secure campus for our parishioners and guests.

RUTH DECKENBACH

Coordinator of Ministries: Access/Disability, Mental Health, Prisoners or Patients

Ruth joined The Basilica staff in 2023. As a Coordinator of Ministries on the Christian Life team she works with our staff and volunteers to build our crucial ministries that serve our community. She is a licensed social worker with a passion for social justice and uplifting others. She is a graduate of The University of St. Thomas School of Law. She was drawn to The Basilica because of its values and mission.



Rámond Mitchell



Taylor Liles



Joe Cybert



Ruth Deckenbach

NEW STAFF — MISSION ADVANCEMENT

JULIA HANSON

Director of Annual Fund & Major Giving

Julia joined The Basilica team in the spring of 2023. She brings over 10 years of experience in nonprofit fundraising, marketing, and communications. Her favorite part of fundraising is connecting people with the causes they feel passionate about supporting. She is thrilled to be working as the Director of Annual Fund and Major Giving at The Basilica.

ROXENE FREESE

Development Officer

Roxene joined The Basilica staff in March 2023. Her background is primarily in corporate strategic sales and marketing and has traveled to dozens of countries. She enjoys learning about new cultures, walking the lakes, movies, and museums.



Roxene Freese, Sadie Uri, Julia Hanson, Brigette Olson

SADIE URI

Development Operations Coordinator

Sadie joined The Basilica's Mission Advancement team 2023. She has experience in public service, government work, and technology and is passionate about continued learning and giving back to the community.

BRIGETTE OLSON

Development Assistant

Brigette joined The Basilica staff in November 2022. Previously she worked in early childhood education as a director for seven years. Her hobbies include basketball, running, reading, and calligraphy.

THANK YOU — JANET GROVE

This past fall, as a staff and community, we were able to honor Janet Grove for her over 47 years of service to our parish. At her farewell appreciation dinner her colleagues and friends shared stories and memories of working with Janet and awarded her the "EGOT Recognition in Ministry." EGOT is an acronym for the Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony Awards—an honor for extremely talented individuals, such as Janet. Fr. Daniel Griffith, shared that it has been an honor to work with Janet and wished her well in her new adventures in retirement.

Janet's long list of accomplishments at The Basilica include: Music and Children's Music Ministry, Marriage Ministry, Access and Inclusion Ministry (AIM), and Employment Ministry. Her work establishing The Basilica's Mental Health Ministry is considered a groundbreaking model for the country. She has served with passion and dedication and has impacted thousands of lives in The Basilica community.

"I was so fortunate to carve out a niche for myself here over the past 47 years where I was able to sing, direct children's musicals, plan weddings, run the employment, mental health, and disability ministries, and begin a prison ministry.

I often heard from people coming into the employment ministry that they wanted a job that made a difference. I had that job and offer thanks to all who made it possible." ✚



Fr. Daniel Griffith with Janet Grove and her husband Jerry Irvin at farewell dinner.