

From the Archives

Early Music at First Church

One of First Church's treasures is its choir, which graces either the Chancel or the Gallery for services from September until June each year. However, did you know that our current practice of a full 4-part adult choir leading each service was not established until the mid-1940s? From the church's early days until 1944 when our church's first Minister of Music, Donald Kettring, arrived, music leadership for worship services primarily came from a quartet of staff singers. As noted by Kettring in his widely circulated book, *Steps Toward a Singing Church* (1948), the quartet at First Church was always considered among the finest. Kettring remarked, "All the members and soloists were of high professional caliber who enjoyed a fine and deserved reputation in the community and Central Ohio."

Even the architectural designs (below) for the main floor of the Parish House (1931) bear witness to the presence of the quartet. The space designated as "Choir Room" in the architect's renderings is actually the small space that serves as the Sacristy today, where our deacons store and prepare elements of worship for our congregation. If you have ever peeked inside that space, you cannot imagine a choir being able to get inside the room, let alone rehearse. The current Choir Room, located on the second floor of the Parish House, was initially designed as a Youth Lounge and was converted to a proper rehearsal space when Kettring set his plan into motion to establish our first comprehensive music program, spanning from children to adults.

Church member Nancy Braverman has authored "Music at First Church: Its History and Its Character" which you can access [here](#). If you are interested in more detailed information about the musical legacy of our church, you'll find Nancy's work a fascinating read. Thank you, Nancy!

