

Sanford Dole, works faithfully among us to create a choral congregation. At St. Gregory's we create the liturgy together. Each voice adds to the experience of worship in a way that makes this weekly creation possible. Without expert leadership our many voices would not blend in that harmony which is an icon of God. Sanford has loved beautiful music from our choir, collaborated with the staff in planning liturgy, and been a sensitive pastor to all. Through his compositions he has provided a new song for the whole church, both in congregational signing and in choral offerings.

After 18 years of service to St. Gregory's Sanford Dole is taking four months sabbatical leave from the parish. His leave begins on July 1.

Sabbaticals are about rest, restoration and renewal. Sanford plans to spend the first part of his time away from us in Colorado where he will rest and begin to compose new music. It will be a time for him to enjoy the luxury – and the challenge – of uninterrupted silence and solitude. Then he will travel to Europe to experience music in a variety of settings, both in the church and elsewhere. Sanford will return from his leave on November 1. His first Sunday back with us will be All Saints Sunday.

During Sanford's sabbatical our choir and congregation will be lead by two interim directors, RuthE. Wells and Rebecca Achenbach. RuthE. will be in residence July and August and Rebecca in September and October. They are both accomplished musicians.

RuthE. currently serves as music director at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Tiburon and as an associate conductor of Consort Chorale in San Anselmo. She has been involved in church music all her life. She is a fourth-generation church choir director, albeit the first woman in the family to do so. RuthE. has known Sanford since her first San Francisco Symphony Chorus audition in 1991, and has sung in the Sanford Dole Ensemble both in it's infancy and it's latter day reincarnation.

RuthE. was an active member at St. Gregory of Nyssa from 1995-1998, was an Easter pilgrim during many of the years she lived in Friday Harbor, Washington, and sang with the choir when she initially returned to the Bay Area in 2007. For the past three years, she has been the voice of The Evangelist in the Good Friday gospel reading, juggling services between WPC and SGN during Holy Week with delight.

Rebecca is Artistic Director and Founder of Voices of Cecilia Ensembles, a choral ensemble of treble voices dedicated to enriching and promoting diverse forms of music and the arts. She is also Minister of Music at St Andrew United Church of Christ in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Since the late 1970's Rebecca has worked as a choral conductor, vocal instructor, classroom teacher, and mezzo soloist.

Prior to moving to Lancaster in 1999, Rebecca actively participated in the choir at St. Gregory's, attended our conferences in liturgy & music. She also served as a Cantor at the National Acolyte Festival in Washington D.C. under the leadership of a team from St. Gregory's. Like RuthE., Rebecca has performed with the Sanford Dole Ensemble.

I have every hope that our community will learn new ways of making music during Sanford's sabbatical. You can support this effort by faithfully attending liturgy, sharing your voice, and noticing what it's like to do all of this in Sanford's absence. I hope that you will respect Sanford's time away. You can support him during his sabbatical by giving him space to rest and the opportunity to leave the concerns of parish life behind. From July through October just imagine that he has a "Do Not Disturb" sign on his door. And please remember Sanford in your prayers.

Please join us for Sanford's final Sunday on June 26. We will offer him our community's blessing as he begins an important time of rest.