

# New article on church music

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

November 17, 2011

Along with my work at the *Century*, I work part-time as a church musician (at [Christ Lutheran](#) on Chicago's northwest side). While my writing/blogging is in general less ministry-oriented than that of many other *Century* contributors, I do get into worship and music stuff from time to time.

In fact, I started working on a *Century* feature on church music before I started working here. But soon after that I got the job, in which I do far more editorial work than writing--so I set the article aside for quite a while (along with most other writerly ideas more substantive than a blog post). But I finally turned back to it, and today [we finally published it](#).

The article's premise is to seek out congregations in which the approach to music has more or less abandoned the old traditional-vs.-contemporary binary altogether. But as I attended services at [four very different churches](#) and talked to their pastors and church musicians, other threads emerged: the role music plays in shaping congregational identity, the tension between inclusiveness and aesthetic standards, the role of the assembly in worship, the importance of instrumentation, the thematic possibilities and limitations of different repertoires.

In other words, classic church-music questions--but in the context of some pretty innovative congregations. I'd be glad to hear your thoughts about [the article](#) or about these questions generally.