

Free concerts Thursday nights

By [Beth Merrill Neel](#)

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Evidently we've been reaching out to our neighbors without meaning to do so. It's the latest church trend—unintentional evangelism.

Every Thursday, our choir rehearses in our fellowship hall, a large and acoustically great space on the second floor of the education wing. With 50 or 60 singers gathered, the room gets a little stuffy, so we open the windows that face 16th Street and the apartment building across the road.

Last fall, through sheer coincidence, we learned that some of our neighbors gather together in one of the apartments to have a beer or a glass of something and to listen to the choir rehearse.

How great is that?

Now I love our choir, as a group and as individuals, and while there are a few stellar voices in it, there are also plain ol' regular good voices in it too, but when they come together—magic. That's the thing about choirs, isn't it; the sum is greater than the parts. (I love it when math doesn't work.)

The choir and our music director have been kind enough to let me sing with them for the major work they're doing this month, pieces of Christopher Tin's [Calling All Dawns](#). I'm learning to sing in Swahili and Polish and Maori. My brain is very excited about all of this.

I wonder what our neighbors think when they hear us singing strange phrases like "baba yetu" or "kia hora." Do they know we are singing a prayer? Do they know we are singing about peace?

I suspect that our neighbors will not show up on Sunday to hear the final product of any rehearsal. I'm okay with that because maybe showing up on Sunday isn't the point. They do put up with a lot from us: occasional construction, taking up a lot of on-street parking on Sunday morning, people showing up for help at strange hours.

Maybe our free Thursday night concerts are one way to thank them for being our neighbors, no strings attached.

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