

The music for this anthem, sung at the Episcopal Church of St. Andrew and St. Charles on January 19, 2020, was written by Mark Schweizer. In the early 1990s, he founded the St. James Music Press in Hopkinsville, KY, where he was Director of Music at the Methodist Church. The company was founded on the unique idea that you could buy a booklet of several pieces for choir, and then copy the music as you wished. The concept was very successful, and is now a web-based organization where for a yearly fee one can access, and copy, their entire catalog of anthems and instrumental music, much of which was composed by Mark. Our choir has used SJMP compositions from the first booklet, and the SJMP has been a boon to St. Andrew & St. Charles. It is a rare month which goes by without the choir singing at least one anthem from one of their many composers.

Mark was born on New Year's Day, 1956, in Winter Park, Florida. He graduated from Stetson University in DeLand, Florida, with a degree in music after he realized that architecture required a lot of math. He later received a doctorate in vocal performance from the University of Arizona. In varying stages of his career, Mark waited tables, wrote articles for Collegehumor.com, won opera competitions, sang oratorios, taught in college music departments, raised pot-bellied pigs and hedgehogs, directed church choirs, sang the bass solo to Beethoven's 9th with Robert Shaw and the Atlanta Symphony, hosted a classical music radio show, taught in a seminary, sung recitals, started a regional opera company, published choral music, built a log cabin, wrote opera librettos, directed stage productions, helped his wife to raise their two children and managed to remain married for forty-one years. He also owned several chainsaws.

But he might say his greatest accomplishment was publishing the fifteen "Liturgical Mysteries," about an Episcopal choir director/detective with a flair for bad writing, beginning with "The Alto Wore Plaid." Sadly, after publication of the final book in the series, "The Choir Director Wore Out," Mark was diagnosed with a very aggressive brain tumor, and he died on November 9, 2019, surrounded by his family in Tryon, North Carolina. In honor of Mark, choirs around the country, and probably around the world, are singing his compositions during the month of January. We are happy to be part of that tribute.