

HERE'S WHAT SOME OF THE **SACRED MUSIC MAJORS** HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THIS
UNIQUE MAJOR AT AUGUSTANA COLLEGE



Tim Gabriel, '09

1. *Why did you decide to do the Sacred Music emphasis at Augustana in the first place?*

I wanted to do something in music but I didn't really want to do music education. My skills and background pointed me toward pursuing Church Music.

2. *What was the hardest/worst part of the program? the easiest/best part?*

The hardest part was learning to develop new skills: singing, conducting, organ playing. The best part is that now I am working in a church while going to grad school and really enjoying what I do. I'm getting paid to practice!

3. *Tell a quick story about some highlight of your Augie studies in Sacred Music--a serious one or a fun one.*

The highlight of my Augie studies was performing the finale from Rheinberger's organ concerto in F at Concerto/Aria. This was an amazing experience!

4. *What are your career dreams right now?*

I hope to one day be a full time director of music in an ELCA congregation, a college organ professor, or both.

5. *What advantages has the major given you as you pursue your graduate studies or your career options?*

The best thing I received academically from Augustana was the religion classes that forced me to think. I especially enjoyed Dr. Murray Haar's world religions courses which taught me to "think that I could be wrong." I also received a solid musical foundation on which I am now building at the University of Kansas.

6. *Anything else you'd like to share. . . .*

I will be finishing up my MM in Church Music this spring and will most likely begin a DMA in the fall in Organ performance. I have been working for a year now at Stilwell United Methodist Church in Stilwell, KS as director of music.



Alyssa Nance, '09

1. Why did you decide to do the Sacred Music emphasis at Augustana in the first place?

I decided to do the Sacred Music emphasis at Augustana because it felt like a natural extension of my involvement with the Augustana Choir, Chapel Musicians, and coursework as a BA Music major. I wanted to be involved in the music education program, but felt like public school practicums and student teaching wasn't quite the track for me.

2. What was the hardest/worst part of the program? the easiest/best part?

The best part of the program was my internship with Michael Elsbernd, Director of Music at First Lutheran Church. All of my classes that prepared me for this internship were outstanding, but nothing prepared me for the job that I have now like my internship did. I was given the opportunity to conduct the Adult Choir, FLYGHT (youth choir), observe the bell choir, and participate in Music and Worship Committee meetings. Dr. Elsbernd is extremely knowledgeable in his field and was a great resource during my last year of work at Augustana.

The most challenging part of the program for me was familiarizing myself with the large repertory of sacred choral and instrumental music. The two semesters of Music and Worship classes helped me learn a lot of this, but I know it will be a challenge to continue to find the best fitting music for the worship services that I plan.

3. Tell a quick story about some highlight of your Augie studies in Sacred Music--a serious one or a fun one.

One of the most memorable experiences as a Sacred Music student was attempting to give a presentation on the book "Theology, Music, and Time" by Jeremy Begbie for Professor Ann Pederson's class. The three sacred music majors (Tim Gabriel, Abby Thompson, and I) spent months poring through the book to present it to our class. To this day, I can say the Begbie book was one of the most challenging things I have ever had to prepare!

4. What are your career dreams right now?

I am currently finishing my final year in the MM Voice Performance degree at the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. I am also the Director of Music

at Red Bridge Christian Church in Kansas City. My career dreams are to be able to be the Director of Music for a church alongside being a performer in classical voice.

5. *What advantages has the major given you as you pursue your graduate studies or your career options?*

The advantage of the Sacred Music track is that I was given specific training in choral conducting and worship planning. In applying for my first Director of Music job, I was able to show potential employers an entire portfolio of my work as an undergraduate in worship planning, choral conducting, and running a church music program. This portfolio, combined with my Augustana education, has given me significant leverage against other job candidates.