

First United Methodist Church of Gainesville, Florida
presents

THE PREMIERE OF
R E Q U I E M

HEATHER SORENSON

*Commissioned by The Congregation of
First United Methodist Church of Gainesville, Florida
with hope and light for the world.*

APRIL 23, 2023

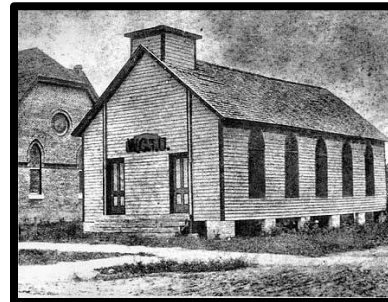
4:00 p.m.

SING23

www.fumcgv.org/sing23

First United Methodist Church of Gainesville and the commission...

Founded in 1857, First UMC was the first Methodist Church in Gainesville, Florida and is the “mother” church of many of the other United Methodist Churches in town. Our very own Epworth Hall, built in 1883, was the original site of the East Florida Seminary which would later become the University of Florida.



In 1886, the first brick sanctuary was built and was converted to the Fellowship Hall and Christian Worker's Chapel in 1942 when our current Gothic-style sanctuary was built between Epworth Hall and Fellowship Hall.

Although many changes have occurred over the years, including adding and subtracting ministries, building renovations, and more, one thing has stayed the same - our love for Christ shown by our commitment to making our community and our world a better place.



At First UMC, our mission is to “Connect our Church with our Community and our Community with Christ!” We commit to worshipping God, not only on Sunday mornings but the other six days of the week through actions of kindness, service, and love in our families, community, and world. We have a core focus on caring for the marginalized in our community.

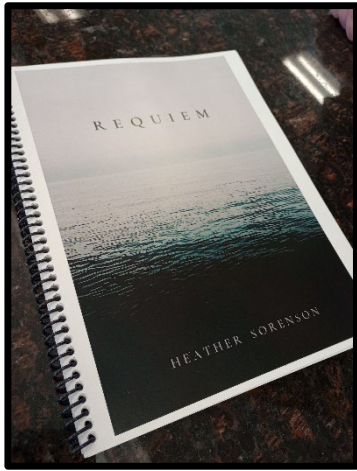
Our faith family helps those in our community through our Community Outreach Ministry which provides support in such areas as utilities, rent, and bus passes to those in need, along with providing a nourishing meal every Monday. To extend our reach, we have also teamed with various local organizations such as Family Promise and the Helping Hands Clinic.

We believe that we should not be serving only those in need, but also seeking justice for those who have been, and still are, marginalized. With open hearts, open minds, and open doors, we strive to live as a faith family that welcomes and affirms those of every race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic condition, family structure, and mental or physical ability into all aspects of the life of this congregation.



In 2019, after the decisions of the United Methodist Church's General Conference affecting our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters, our faith family overwhelmingly voted to become a Reconciling Ministries congregation.

In August of 2021, current Director of Music Ministries, Michael Ekbladh and former Director, Robert (BJ) Jackson discussed the possibility of commissioning a new *Requiem* from composer Heather Sorenson.



For many, the term *requiem* means a “Mass for the Dead.” A *requiem* is also an act or token of remembrance. Each year we light candles and ring bells for All Saints Day, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and many other significant moments of remembrance. Each of these is a *requiem*.

As we emerge from the pandemic into a new world, we need to reflect and heal from the collective trauma of this experience. Out of this need to heal was born the idea of a *Requiem*. The overall concept for this work is not that of a typical *Requiem*, but something reflective of our current times and how we emerge from them stronger; a *Requiem* mourning the life we left behind, those we have lost, and hope for the new life to come.

The congregation of First UMC is proud and honored to present this new work to the world for healing and the rebuilding of our community. Following the premiere in Gainesville, we will join Heather Sorenson and 250 other singers for the Carnegie Hall premiere on November 27, 2023.

Today’s performance is dedicated to the memory of Robert (BJ) Jackson, Director of Music Ministries from 2007-2017 and to all those who helped this day become a reality. The light and love of this congregation will forever be a part of this work.



About the composer



Heather Sorenson is an internationally known composer, arranger, and orchestrator whose works are performed in churches, schools, universities, concerts, and competitions worldwide. Initially recognized for her skill as a pianist, she is now widely known for her choral and instrumental works, with hundreds of

compositions in print through various publishing houses including Hal Leonard, Shawnee Press, Alfred Music, the Lorenz Corporation, Hope Publishing, Lillenas, Fred Bock Music, and others.

Eclectic in her musicianship, Heather easily maneuvers the contemporary, traditional, and classical genres of music. Her ability to navigate such a wide diversity of style and venue earns her the qualification of being one of the most versatile musicians in the industry. Her recent commissions include works for Texas A&M University and the John F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation, in addition to many privately-funded commissions.

Teaching has been a large part of Heather's career. She taught all elementary levels of music at Grace Academy of Dallas for 4 years, served as an adjunct music professor at Baylor University, and has served on many master class panels in piano and songwriting. She is a sought-after guest speaker and conductor at churches across America and leads scores of sessions each year at various worship conferences, schools, and universities.

Over the past several years, Heather has appeared multiple times at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and Constitution Hall in the roles of pianist, composer, and conductor. Although her career is sometimes on a big stage, Heather's heart is leading the Church in worship, and she feels that her greatest calling is using her music to connect people with God.

Currently Heather spends her time juggling a full writing load as well as traveling as a guest artist and lecturer. In her free time, she is usually planning and performing benefit concerts for her favorite non-profit organizations. She makes her home in the Dallas, TX area with her dog Darla.

For more information about Heather Sorenson visit www.heathersorenson.com

First United Methodist Church of Gainesville

presents

THE WORLD PREMIERE OF

R E Q U I E M

by

Heather Sorenson

featuring the Requiem Festival Chorus and Orchestra

Michael Ekbladh, Conductor

Jessica Van Leer, Soprano

Elvis Gomez, Tenor

April 23, 2023

4:00 p.m.

Introduction and Welcome

Reverend Beth Snarr
Lead Pastor, First UMC-Gainesville

“We Gather Together”

Edward Kremser
arr. Heather Sorenson

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;
He chastens and hastens his will to make known;
The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing;
Sing praises to his name; he forgets not his own.

Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,
Whose kingdom calls all to the love which endures.
So from the beginning the fight we were winning:
You, Lord, were at our side; all glory be yours!

We all do extol you, our leader triumphant,
And pray that you still our defender will be.
Let your congregation escape tribulation:
Your name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!
Theodore Baker

“You Know My Soul”

Michael E. Ekbladh

God, you have searched me and know my soul.
You know when I slumber and when I rise;
You hear my thoughts.
You search out my path and my lying down;
You know my ways.

Before I speak, you know my words.
For you formed me within the womb.
When I rise to heaven, you are there.
When I wake, you are with me.

If I soar on the wings of morning or dwell in depths of night,
Your hand will lead me.

God, you have searched me and know my heart.
Hear me and know my thoughts and fears.
Lead me in the way everlasting.

paraphrase of *Psalm 139*
Michael E. Ekbladh

“A Breathing Place”

Heather Sorenson

Your spirit hovers over me and sings a living song.
With love and mercy, covers me, and bids me sing along.
And deep within that sacred space You take me in Your warm embrace.
There I find my breathing place. Alleluia!

Your spirit dances like a flame and leaps within my soul.
It burns away my guilt and shame, it heals and makes me whole.
A torch that leads through shadowed ways and lights the path with perfect grace.
There I find my breathing place. Alleluia!

Your Spirit comes like whirling winds and lifts our dust on high.
Our wounded clay You mold and break until we learn to fly.
Then soaring on the wings of praise, I see the shining of Your face.
There I find my breathing place. Alleluia!

Joseph Martin

“Still”

Heather Sorenson

Still. Still.
Oh, my Father, still the storm in me.
O Lord, please hear my prayer.
To the raging deep, I've swept.
Lift me from my despair.
Still. Still.
Oh, my Father, still the storm in me.
Still. Still. Still my soul.

Inspired by *Requiem*, a painting by artist Mo Sanford.



The final movement of *Requiem* is based on the old hymn "Like a River Glorious." So, Sanford created a river where a paper boat (representing loved ones) is released into the sunset to "cross to the other shore." If you zoom in, you will find the names of people who have passed written into ripples of the water.

One of our First UMC members is included on the painting: Lannie "Tommy" Thompson

“Like a River Glorious”

words by Frances R. Havergal
music by James Mountain

1. Like a riv-er glo-rious Is God's perfect peace, O - ver all vic - to-rious
2. Hidden in the hol-low Of His blessed hand, Nev - er foe can fol-low,
3. Ev-'ry joy or tri - al Fall-eth from a - bove, Trac'd up-on our di - al

In its bright in-crease; Perfect, yet it flow-eth Fuller ev - 'ry day;
Nev-er trai-tor stand; Not a surge of wor-ry, Not a shade of care,
By the Sun of Love; We may trust Him ful - ly All for us to do;

Per-fect, yet it groweth Deep-er all the way.
Not a blast of hur-ry Touch the spir-it there. Stayed up-on Je - ho-vah,
They who trust him whol-ly Find Him wholly true.

Hearts are ful-ly blessed; Finding, as He promised, Perfect peace and rest.

“Requiem”

Heather Sorenson

*Commissioned by the Congregation of First United Methodist Church of Gainesville, Florida
with hope and light for the world.*

Jessica Van Leer, Soprano
Elvis Gomez, Tenor

Please hold your applause until after the final movement.

- I. Intriot
- II. Kyrie
- III. Sanctus
- IV. Pie Jesu

The audience is invited to join the choir in whispered prayers as part of the composition. A handbell or triangle indicates the starting and stopping of the whispered prayers.

- V. Agnus Dei
- VI. Psalmus
- VII. Lux Aeterna
- VIII. Benedictus

1. INTROIT

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
(Rest eternal, grant to them, O Lord,)
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.
(And let perpetual light shine upon them.)
A hymn, O God, becomes Thee in Zion.
Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion.
A vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem.
Et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.
Lord, hear my prayer.
All flesh shall come to Thee.

2. KYRIE

Kyrie Eleison,
(Lord, have mercy,)
Have mercy on me, Lord.
Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For they shall inherit heaven.
Blessed are the children who are scorned,
For they shall be held in Your embrace.
Blessed are the families without homes.
And blessed are those who mourn.

3. SANCTUS

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
(Holy, Holy, Holy)
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
(Lord God of Hosts.)
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
(Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.)
Hosanna in excelsis!
(Hosanna in the highest!)

4. PIE JESU

Pie Jesu, Domine,
Pie Jesu, dona eis requiem.
(Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them rest.)
Into Your hands, O Lord,
We commit the souls of those we love.
Pie Jesu.

(The audience is invited to join the choir in whispered prayers here as part of the composition. A handbell or triangle indicates the starting and stopping of the whispered prayers.)

Hold them in Your safe embrace.
Warm them with the sunlight of Your face.

5. AGNUS DEI

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi.
(Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.)

Behold, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

Behold your God, behold your King,
Behold the Lamb, behold the GREAT I AM.

*Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God,
shouldst die for me?

**And Can It Be? Words by Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

6. PSALMUS**

I lift my eyes unto the hills from where my help is come.

My help cometh from the Lord
who made the heavens and the earth.

He will not slumber,
the Lord will not sleep.

The Lord is my Shepherd.

Even in death,

He is faithful my soul to keep.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of death, He will
guide me. I will fear no harm.

I will not fear for He is near.

***Paraphrasing from Psalms 121 and 23.*

7. LUX AETERNA

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine.

(May light eternal shine upon them, O Lord.)

They shall shine like the stars of heaven.

They shall shine like the stars on a moonless night.

They shall shine with the flame of the Father's love.

Lux aeterna, cum sanctis tuis.

(May light eternal shine upon them with Your saints forever.)

8. BENEDICTUS*

Stayed upon Jehovah,

Dona nobis requiem.

(God grant us rest.)

Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace,

Overall victorious in its bright increase.

Perfect yet it floweth every day.

It groweth deeper, fuller all the way.

Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blessed,

Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,

Never foe can follow, never traitor stand.

We may trust Him fully, all for us to do;

And they who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true.

**Incorporating "Like a River Glorious," words by Frances R. Havergal (1836-1879)*

Program Notes

While this Requiem was initially commissioned in memory of precious lives lost during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was written to provide hope, healing, and comfort to all who have experienced the sting of loss.

The composer includes familiar texts from the original Latin mass but then modifies the Requiem through the occasional use of original lyrics, Scripture texts, and hymn references. Based on her own faith system which offers comfort so that we do “not grieve as those who have no hope,” Ms. Sorenson incorporates moments of peace, even joy, through-out the work. When these moments are interspersed with the expected melancholy and angst associated with a requiem, the listeners follow an authentic journey of grief and peace, tension and release. The heartbeat of the commission is culminated in the final movement with the borrowed phrase: “finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.”

The audience is invited to join the choir in whispered prayers in the “Pie Jesu” movement.

Jessica Van Leer, Soprano

Jessica Van Leer is an adjunct professor of music at Santa Fe College. She graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Music Degree in Vocal Performance and earned her Master of Music Degree in Vocal Performance from Shenandoah Conservatory in Winchester, Virginia. Ms. Van Leer has been teaching music at Santa Fe College for 10 years. She serves as the lead faculty member for the General Education music classes. Ms. Van Leer is the Assistant Director of the Santa Fe Singers and serves as the Assistant Music Director for the Main Stage Musical Theater productions at Santa Fe college. Various stage productions include *Susannah*, *Fables*, *Godspell*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* and *Is There Life After High School?*. Ms. Van Leer keeps an active professional performance schedule in and around the Gainesville area.

Elvis Gomez, Tenor

Elvis Gomez is a Referral Coordinator for UF Health Shands with the Pediatric Specialties division. He graduated from Santa Fe with a Bachelor in Applied Science in Health Services Administration. Mr. Gomez began his singing career as a member of the Florida Singing Sons Boychoir, under the direction of David R. White. As a member of one of the premier ensembles in the country, he had the opportunity to participate in concert tours to Germany, Austria, the Pacific Northwest, and along the states on the East Coast. Elvis is frequently featured as soloist with the Sante Fe Singers under the direction of Lynn Sandefur. Elvis remains an active singer with various ensemble around the Gainesville area.

Michael Ekbladh, Conductor

Goodness, I have done a lot. For more information visit www.michaelekbladh.com or “GTS,” Google That Stuff.

REQUIEM FESTIVAL CHORUS

Gavan McVey, rehearsal accompanist

Lynn Sandefur-Gardner, accompanist

Section Leaders

Jessica Van Leer, Katy Lassiter, Lacy Patton, Elvis Gomez, Connor Behrmann

Soprano

Estelle Ayomen
Sylvie Beukelman
Patricia Carrico
Karin Jeter
Laura Lippert
Michelle Llana
Hannah Mazur
Jennifer Miller
Sondra Moorhead
Judith Morrow
Sarah Mutschlecner
Sandy Reeves
Elaina Rodriquez
Kathy Sutton
Jessica Van Leer
Cindy Woodruff

Alto

Brittany Bruggeman
Jill Dumas
Lynnette Edmondson
Kathy Henderson
Katy Lassiter
Betty McDowell
Daryl Mullee
Lacy Patton
Martha Peyser
Julie Ray
Lynn Sandefur-Gardner
Beth Snarr
Jolene Wagstaff

Tenor

Peter Bushnell
Flo Caldwell
Cameron Carter
Elvis Gomez
Matthew Hesters
Tim Leslie
Raphael Llana
Hugh McDowell
Paul Moore
Jack Moorhead
Andrew Netardus
Tim Redding
Carl Rocap
Michael Woodruff

Bass

Connor Behrmann
John Bevis
Chris Demers
Robert Dittbenner
Bill Lovett
Zach Strickland
Dean Brown
Josh Mazur
Tim Mutschlecner
Chris Qualmann
Charles Sanders-Ekbladh
Lenny Terry
Avery Wallace



Each rehearsal we focused on one of the 7 stages of grief. Our first week was about “letting go.” Singers were invited to write on a piece of dissolving paper what it was they need to ‘let go’ and place it in the water. This experience was shared with the orchestra following the dress rehearsal on April 22.

REQUIEM FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

Flute

Lydian Haugen
Bonney Haugen

Oboe

Peyton Redmyer

Clarinet

Deborah Salmi

Bassoon

Raul Chaurand

French Horn

Will Winter
Martha Dixon

Trumpets

Tim Haugen
April Zink

Trombone

Jacob Hardy
Michael Stanton

Tuba

Vance Orr

Timpani

Garrett Hecker

Percussion

Patrick Bain
Jahira Williams

Harp

Meredith Coffman

Piano

Gavan McVey

Violin I

Aaron Culverson
Ashley Wu
Juan Florez
Isabella Caffee
Pamela Mireles
Brett Bechakas

Violin II

Emelia Ulrich
Mingyin Zhu
Wellarose Jimenez
Vivian Rao
AJ Pulliam

Viola

Maurya Dickerson
Catherine Ziegler
Julia Deeghan
Stephen Fine

Cello

Mattia Imponenti
Sean Muller
Jason Schandorf
Emily Smith

Contrabass

David Ottenberg

A special thank you to Santa Fe College Music Department and Howard Bishop Middle School Band for the use of the xylophone and tubular bells.

Join Us!

WE'LL SAVE YOU A SEAT.

Traditional Worship
Sunday at 10:30 a.m.



WE WELCOME AND AFFIRM THOSE OF EVERY RACE, ETHNICITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION, FAMILY STRUCTURE, AND MENTAL OR PHYSICAL ABILITY INTO ALL ASPECTS OF THE LIFE OF THIS CONGREGATION.



419 NE 1st St.

www.fumcgnv.org

CENTER

STAGE

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Gainesville
419 NE 1st Street

www.fumcgnv.org/ **SING23**



Keep up with First UMC
Music Ministry Events.

Join our e-blast, text list, and make a donation using the enclosed envelope or online.

You may place your envelopes in the black boxes by the exits and the Fellowship Hall or visit the SING23 page.

