

LEADERSHIP OF CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

Music Leadership Certification Program • 2022 Conference (Ann Arbor, MI)

Instructors:		Francisco Ruiz Vocalist & Music Director Los Angeles, CA Franciscoruizmusic@gmail.com		Matt Meyer Itinerant Worship Leader Boston, MA matt@rhythmrevelations.com
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Purpose

This course will develop strong, effective, and inspiring leadership of hymns/songs for congregational singing. Through the use of both practical and written assignments, candidates will use a wide range of musical styles and techniques to help them broaden and deepen the worship experience of the congregations they serve.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate:

- a clearly articulated philosophy of the importance and appropriate usage of congregational singing in worship and congregational life
- familiarity with current UU hymn/song sources
- an individual leadership style that encourages enthusiastic and strong singing from the congregation
- competency in effective and concise teaching of a new hymn/song in unison and in harmony
- proficiency in leading as a singer, instrumentalist, and/or in collaboration with an instrumentalist
- effective communication with the congregation regarding hymn/song context and background, including cultural and stylistic awareness
- proficiency in a variety of musical styles (*e.g.* standard hymns, folk songs, etc.)
- creativity in using a variety of techniques and approaches (*e.g.* dynamics, modulation, instrumentation, etc.)
- a knowledge of basic copyright laws applicable to congregational singing

Required Course Materials

All of the following are available for purchase from “inSpirit,” the UU Book and Gift Shop, at uuabookstore.org. (Note: you should plan to have at least one copy of each of these in your professional library for the purposes of this class. You *do not* need to schlep them to Portland with you!)

- *Singing the Living Tradition* (SLT)
- *Singing the Journey* (STJ)
- *Las Voces del Camino* (LVdC)

Recommended Web Resources

The instructors recommend that students familiarize themselves with the following web resources, and bookmark them for frequent reference:

- [Singing the Journey song information](#)
- [Music for Online Worship](#) UUA website
- [“Guide to Copyright Information”](#) published by the Church Music Publishers Association
- [“Copyright and The Church.”](#) published by the United Church of Christ
- [“The Door, Not the House”](#) by Matt Meyer
This resource is a bit dated, but we hope it will be useful for discussion.
- [“GA Choir Message” by LaTonya Richardson](#)
- [7 Myths about Cultural Appropriation](#)

Songlists

- [Matt Meyer's Songlist](#)
- [Music That Makes Community](#)
- [Songs for the Great Turning](#)
- [Justice Choir](#)
- [Poor People's Campaign Songbook](#)
- [One Community Songlist](#)

Pre-Class Assignments (due June 22, 2022)

1. Read the following documents before coming to class in Ann Arbor, making note of any points you find particularly inspiring, challenging, or otherwise noteworthy:
 - a. Joyce Poley, [“Leading As A Vocalist”](#)
 - b. Charlotte Kroeker, [“We Are What We Sing”](#)
 - c. David M. Glasgow, “Songleading from the Piano”
 - d. The “Recommended Web Resources” listed in the section above, which you have of course already bookmarked for easy access.

2. Select any song or hymn that would be appropriate for UU worship, and prepare to spend approximately five minutes teaching it to the “congregation” of your colleagues and instructors in class when we gather in Ann Arbor. (You may lead either as a singer or as an instrumentalist.) Your selection should be one of the following:
 - a song or hymn you assume to be unfamiliar to the congregation
 - a familiar song or hymn that you want to do differently (*e.g.*, add a harmony part, use a different melody, etc.)
 - an *a cappella* round you may be doing for the first time with your congregation.
3. After you have completed the above, but **no later than June 22, 2022**, digitally submit the following (preferably by giving instructors [“Comment” permissions](#) on a Google Doc) to *both instructors* at the email addresses given at the top of this document.
 - a. A brief bio (no more than 1 page) of your own musical background and areas of special interest, and the music you are involved in at present (church or otherwise).
 - b. A short video* of you leading your community in a single song. This needn’t involve any extraordinary preparation—we’d just like to see a baseline on which we can build during our work together.
 - c. A list of questions or concerns you may have about this course, the assignments, or any of the pre-course readings.
 - d. A list of three goals you have for the course—how can we help you improve your skills as a UU songleader?
 - e. The title of the piece you chose to teach to the class in Portland (#2 above), and a brief outline, in point form, of your proposed teaching approach.

Post-Class Assignments (due by March 1, 2023)

Digitally submit the following, again by giving “Comment” permissions to *both instructors*, no later than March 1, 2023:

1. A “Song Leading Experience Log” of six (6) hymns/songs that demonstrate expansion of your developing skill set, including variety of musical styles and approaches. Sources for your logged songs must include *both* SLT *and* STJ, *plus* at least one of the other UU hymnals (LVdC, MLS, CSS). The pieces you include in your video submission (below) may not be used for this log. (Note: Your log may of course include pieces led during worship, but you may also wish to include leading in other churches, in RE settings, or at social gatherings.)
2. Three video excerpts (none longer than 5 minutes) from one or more worship services in which you act as songleader. These excerpts should show you demonstrating each of the following three skills (one per excerpt):
 - a. Teaching something new to the congregation. For example, teach an unfamiliar song or hymn, a round, a partner song, or a harmony part. This could be done as part of the

ingathering before the service, or at some other event or social gathering.

- b. Verbally contextualizing and leading two hymns or songs (at the same or different services).
 - c. Leading a short congregational piece that acts as part of the liturgy (*e.g.* a sung chalice lighting, meditation, children's song, etc.)
2. A written account of the above songleading experiences contained on your video, detailing your selection process, collaboration process, preparation and implementation. Conclude with a self evaluation of what worked, what didn't work, and what you learned in the process.
 3. An evaluation, **written by your sponsor**, of your entire video project.
 4. *Either* a newsletter article that speaks to the importance of congregational singing, *or* a video of yourself speaking briefly to your congregation, or to a committee in your church, about the importance of congregational singing.

Feedback

After the completion of all course work, participants will receive from the instructors feedback and suggestions for further development based upon the following:

1. Pre- and post-class assignments
2. Class participation during AUUMM conference in July

*About Your Video Submissions

Please use WeTransfer to send video files to three addresses: franciscoruizmusic@gmail.com, matt@rhythmrevelations.com and mlcertification@gmail.com.

To do so:

1. Go to <https://uua.wetransfer.com>
2. Enter the info asked for in the form—the file(s) to be sent, the sender's and recipients' email addresses, and an optional message.
3. Click "Transfer."
4. Shortly after the transfer completes, your chosen recipients will receive an email with a link to the downloadable file, and you (the sender) will get an email confirming that the files were sent.