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Pastor Bryan Gerlach
7782 Uplands Way
Citrus Heights, CA 95610

Dear Bryan,

The end of December has come and gone and only now and I getting around to answering your letter.

As to the date of the dedication service. I am beginning to think seriously of April 14. I had been avoiding that date for several reasons. It allowed only a week of school after Easter recess, not enough time, I had supposed, to get the chorus ready for the service. However, the choir's role is smaller than I had expected and the limitation is disappearing. I had also been holding that date open for the organ recital by the two DMLC girls. Now Joyce Schubkegal seems to want their recital the same weekend as our joint concert with the Lutheran Chorale and the DMLC treble choir. I'm not sure about the wisdom of trying to bring a crowd to the campus on two successive weekends, but... Dave Valleskey will be back on campus at the end of the week, and I will talk with him about the April date. Perhaps you might check your calendar to determine how this date matches your schedule.

I have come to the conclusion that Vespers will not work for the dedication service. This solves our little Magnificat problem. The order will look something like this:

pre-service recital
rite of dedication (Albrecht, Meyer at organ)
opening hymn
greeting
some sort of acclamation
Psalm 98 (Walter Pelz arrangement, enclosed)
lessons
hymn: When In Our Music
sermon
hymn: (optional)
offering and musical offering
Te Deum Laudamus in hymns (cf. explanation below)
prayers
blessing
hymn: Holy God, We Praise Your Name (Ferguson, enclosed)
postlude (congregation remains)

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The two hymns I know I want to do are "When In Our Music" and "Holy God." As to the former, I still do not have a great arrangement of Engelberg, although I have been looking. I have the Drummond Wolff arrangement with two trumpets and will live with it if I can't find something better. If I can't find something within the week, I may commission something. I really like the Ferguson setting of "Holy God," especially the ending. The opening hymn is your choice. It ought to be something which can show off the organ and the organ alone, especially since the Psalm 98 arrangement has full brass choir. You know the organ repertory better than I do, and I will trust your judgment. We may be wise not to put a hymn after the sermon and go right into the musical offering. This is true especially because the Te Deum in hymns will have hymns (obviously!). I've done this with the Te Deum for Christmas and Easter and people have liked it, so we'll do it for this, too. The leader reads the verses of the Te Deum and the congregation sings hymns which match. Eggert would not like it (perhaps you don't, either), but it seems to allow the organ to do what it does best. The rest of the things in the service are obvious, I think. I will make it a priority to compose the Te Deum, although my work should not affect your choice of an opening hymn.

Dan Borgwardt is a fine trumpeter who owns both a regular and a piccolo trumpet. We also have a pretty good flautist, and there is also Jim Schulz' sweet (and professional) tenor voice. We could import an oboe (or a very good flute) if you thought it wise.

I think your ideas about the pre-service recital are fine. Think of getting titles, composers and explanatory notes to me by early March for the service folder.

It's so difficult to think about duplicate services, because one simply can't judge what kind of a crowd we'll have. I am going to cut the chorus down to 25 voices (for the sake of space). I am also thinking of a Seminary family service for students, profs, etc., on Friday night or Monday night, but haven't worked that out in my mind yet. I guess the idea will have to sit for awhile.

The Las Vegas trip went very well. The paper was long (as you can see) but very well received. I am also sending my letter to Kevin Ballard re: CCM. I received a nice letter of apology from him! He admitted it was a pastor on the CYM who had influenced his opinions about me (I wonder who it could be? Frèier, of course!). I went to his concert at St. John's and my feelings about CCM were not changed. Your Dad likely filled you in, and my reactions were similar to his.

Hymnal Committee meetings begin tonight (Wednesday) and last until Monday. This is all beginning to wear a little. The new communion service is done and will be inaugurated at the Parish Revitalization seminars in the twelve districts. I'm biased, of course, but I think it is very good. Eggert is not good. Had his gall bladder out on December 10 and now they can't get a heart medication to sit with his system. He is down to 115 lbs.! I fear what a case of pneumonia will do to him. Good thing we have Kermit on board.

God's blessings on your family and ministry in the new year.

Cordially,

Jim