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Music
MINISTRY
HANDBOOK

Our Lady of Mercy Church
Harborcreek, PA

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OLM MISSION STATEMENT

Our Lady of Mercy is a Eucharistic, Catholic Christian Community of communities formed by the Word of God and the teachings of the Church. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live the values of Jesus Christ in a prayerful, welcoming, and nurturing environment.

EXCERPTS FROM

“SING TO THE LORD: MUSIC IN DIVINE WORSHIP”

Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship, the title of a 2007 document by the Bishops of the United States, presents a clear directive for understanding the role and significance of liturgical music. The following pages are from Chapter One: “Why We Sing” and considers the theological purpose of singing the Liturgy and how singing assists our participation in the Liturgy.

Please take the time to read it and take it to heart.

I. WHY WE SING

1. God has bestowed upon his people the gift of song. God dwells within each human person, in the place where music takes its source. Indeed, God, the giver of song, is present whenever his people sing his praises.²

2. A cry from deep within our being, music is a way for God to lead us to the realm of higher things.³ As St. Augustine says, “Singing is for the one who loves.”⁴ Music is therefore a sign of God’s love for us and of our love for him. In this sense, it is very personal. But unless music sounds, it is not music, and whenever it sounds, it is accessible to others. By its very nature song has both an individual and a communal dimension. Thus, it is no wonder that singing together in church expresses so well the sacramental presence of God to his people.

3. Our ancestors reveled in this gift, sometimes with God’s urging. “Write out this song, then, for yourselves,” God said to Moses. “Teach it to the Israelites and have them recite it, so that this song may be a witness for me.”⁵ The Chosen People, after they passed through the Red Sea, sang as one to the Lord.⁶ Deborah, a judge of Israel, sang to the Lord with Barak after God gave them victory.⁷ David and the Israelites “made merry before the Lord with all their strength, with singing and with citharas, harps, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals.”⁸

² “Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for the temple of God, which you are, is holy” (1 Cor 3:16-17).

³ See St. Augustine, Epis. 161, *De origine animae hominis*, 1, 2; PL XXXIII, 725, as quoted in Pope Pius XII, Encyclical *On Sacred Music (Musicae Sacrae Disciplina)* (MSD), no. 5, www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_25121955_musicae-sacrae_en.html.

⁴ St. Augustine, *Sermo* 336, 1 (PL 1844-1855, 38, 1472).

⁵ Dt 31:19.

⁶ Ex 15:1-18, 21.

⁷ Jgs 4:4–5:31.

⁸ 2 Sm 6:5.

4. Jesus and his apostles sang a hymn before their journey to the Mount of Olives.⁹ St. Paul instructed the Ephesians to “[address] one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts.”¹⁰ He sang with Silas in captivity.¹¹ The letter of St. James asks, “Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise.”¹²

5. Obedient to Christ and to the Church, we gather in liturgical assembly, week after week. As our predecessors did, we find ourselves “singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in [our] hearts to God.”¹³ This common, sung expression of faith within liturgical celebrations strengthens our faith when it grows weak and draws us into the divinely inspired voice of the Church at prayer. Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations can foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken it. Good music “make[s] the liturgical prayers of the Christian community more alive and fervent so that everyone can praise and beseech the Triune God more powerfully, more intently and more effectively.”¹⁴

6. “In human life, signs and symbols occupy an important place. As a being at once body and spirit, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols. . . . Inasmuch as they are creatures, these perceptible realities can become means of expressing the action of God who sanctifies men, and the action of men who offer worship to God.”¹⁵ This sacramental principle is the consistent belief of the Church throughout history. In Liturgy, we use

⁹ Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26.

¹⁰ Eph 5:18-19.

¹¹ “About midnight . . . Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, as the other prisoners listened” (Acts 16:25)

¹² Jas 5:13.

¹³ Col 3:16; see *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), no. 39 (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 2003). See Eph 5:19.

¹⁴ MSD, no. 31; see no. 33.

¹⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), 2nd ed., nos. 1146, 1148 (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–USCCB, 2000).

words, gestures, signs, and symbols to proclaim Christ's presence and to reply with our worship and praise.

7. The primordial song of the Liturgy is the canticle of victory over sin and death. It is the song of the saints, standing beside "the sea of glass": "They were holding God's harps, and they sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb."¹⁶ "Liturgical singing is established in the midst of this great historical tension. For Israel, the event of salvation in the Red Sea will always be the main reason for praising God, the basic theme of the songs it sings before God. For Christians, the Resurrection of Christ is the true Exodus. . . . The definitively new song has been intoned. . . ."¹⁷

8. The Paschal hymn, of course, does not cease when a liturgical celebration ends. Christ, whose praises we have sung, remains with us and leads us through church doors to the whole world, with its joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties.¹⁸ The words Jesus chose from the book of Isaiah at the beginning of his ministry become the song of the Body of Christ. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord."¹⁹

9. Charity, justice, and evangelization are thus the normal consequences of liturgical celebration. Particularly inspired by sung participation, the body of the Word Incarnate goes forth to spread the Gospel with full force and compassion. In this way, the Church leads men and women "to the faith, freedom and peace of Christ by the example of its life and teaching, by the

¹⁶ Rev 15:3.

¹⁷ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (Ignatius Press, 2000), 137-138.

¹⁸ See Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)* (GS), no. 1, in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, new revised edition, ed. Austin Flannery, OP (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1996). All subsequent Second Vatican Council passages come from the Flannery edition.

¹⁹ Lk 4:18; see Is 61:1-2, 58:6.

sacraments and other means of grace. Its aim is to open up for all men a free and sure path to full participation in the mystery of Christ.”²⁰

Participation

10. Holy Mother Church clearly affirms the role within worship of the entire liturgical assembly (bishop, priest, deacon, acolytes, ministers of the Word, music leaders, choir, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and the congregation). Through grace, the liturgical assembly partakes in the life of the Blessed Trinity, which is itself a communion of love. In a perfect way, the Persons of the Trinity remain themselves even as they share all that they are. For our part, “we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.”²¹ The Church urges all members of the liturgical assembly to receive this divine gift and to participate fully “depending on their orders [and] their role in the liturgical services.”²²

11. Within the gathered assembly, the role of the congregation is especially important. “The full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit.”²³

12. Participation in the Sacred Liturgy must be “internal, in the sense that by it the faithful join their mind to what they pronounce or hear, and cooperate with heavenly grace.”²⁴ Even when listening to the various prayers and readings of the Liturgy or to the singing of the choir, the assembly continues to participate actively as they “unite themselves interiorly to what

²⁰ Second Vatican Council, *Ad Gentes Divinitus (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity)* (AG), no. 5.

²¹ Rom 12:5-6

²² Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)* (SC), no. 26.

²³ SC, no. 14.

²⁴ Sacred Congregation for Rites, *Musica Sacram (Instruction on Music in the Liturgy)* (MS), no. 15, in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*; see SC, no. 11.

the ministers or choir sing, so that by listening to them they may raise their minds to God.”²⁵ “In a culture which neither favors nor fosters meditative quiet, the art of interior listening is learned only with difficulty. Here we see how the liturgy, though it must always be properly inculturated, must also be counter-cultural.”²⁶

13. Participation must also be external, so that internal participation can be expressed and reinforced by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes, and by the acclamations, responses, and singing.²⁷ The quality of our participation in such sung praise comes less from our vocal ability than from the desire of our hearts to sing together of our love for God. Participation in the Sacred Liturgy both expresses and strengthens the faith that is in us.

14. Our participation in the Liturgy is challenging. Sometimes, our voices do not correspond to the convictions of our hearts. At other times, we are distracted or preoccupied by the cares of the world. But Christ always invites us to enter into song, to rise above our own preoccupations, and to give our entire selves to the hymn of his Paschal Sacrifice for the honor and glory of the Most Blessed Trinity.

²⁵ MS, no. 15.

²⁶ Pope John Paul II, (Address to Bishops of the Northwest Provinces of the USCCB), in *Ad Limina Addresses: The Addresses of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of the United States, February 1998–October 1998* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1998), no. 3.

²⁷ See SC, no. 30.

ABOUT OLM MUSIC MINISTRY

Music brings joy to the Liturgy as it gives glory to God. It enriches our worship and sends the community forth into the world with the Gospel on their lips and in their hearts. All are invited to participate in this ministry at Our Lady of Mercy Parish. We will help you find the group that is best for you; each provides training and support — you will surely not be alone. New members are always welcome.

WEEKEND MASS ENSEMBLES:

6:00 p.m., 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

The music ministry employs a variety of traditional and contemporary music. Our groups sing in three or four-part harmony and use a variety of instruments including guitar, bass, keyboard, and drums.

We welcome singers of any age who are interested in singing in parts (soprano, alto, tenor, bass). You do not have to read music to join our music ministry.

Rehearsals:

for Saturday 6:00 p.m. Mass:	Saturday afternoons at 5:30 p.m.
for Sunday 8:30 a.m. Mass:	Thursday evenings at 6:45 p.m.
for Sunday 11:00 a.m. Mass:	Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

FESTIVAL ENSEMBLE:

OLM's Festival Ensemble is a gathering of all of Music Ministry brought together for special celebrations such as the Sacred Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil), Christmas Eve and Parish Feast Day. Open to all parishioners and music ministers, this ensemble combines vocalists and instrumentalists within our parish family. Those who sing or play instruments such as trumpet, trombone, violin, flute, cello, oboe, and more are all needed and welcome to participate.

Rehearsals:

Three or four Thursday evenings prior to the celebration. Additional rehearsals may be scheduled.

SCHOLA:

The OLM schola is our four-part vocal ensemble that sings choral music accompanied by piano or sung acappella. The schola sings on Christmas Eve, during the Easter Triduum, and at seasonal concerts. A brief audition is required. Reading music is helpful, but not required.

Rehearsals:

As needed, typically Thursday evenings or after Sunday Mass.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR:

OLM's Children's Choir is specifically for youth who are involved in our Religious Education program. Vocalists are welcome to share their musical gifts with the parish. Members learn about proper singing techniques, cantoring, leading the assembly, and singing as a group. It is a great way for youth to make new friends.

The Children's Choir typically leads music once a month at the 11:00 a.m. Mass, at the 6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass, and participate with the larger music ministry for major celebrations such as Holy Thursday, Easter Sunday, and Parish Feast Day.

Rehearsals:

Tuesday evenings from 5:30 – 6:00 p.m.

CANTORS/PSALMISTS:

The ministry of cantor and psalmist is ideal for adults who demonstrate the ability to lead the assembly in song. Cantors (and Psalmists) lead sung worship (and the Responsorial Psalm) at Sunday and Holy Day Masses, as well as parish funerals and weddings. A brief vocal audition is required for interested cantors.

Rehearsals:

as needed

RESURRECTION CHOIR:

The Resurrection Choir leads the assembly in song at OLM Parish funerals and assists at the annual Mass of Remembrance in December. Members are contacted when a funeral is scheduled and participate as they are able. This is a perfect ministry for those who have mornings free.

No regular rehearsals.

Members should arrive at least 15 minutes before a scheduled funeral.

INSTRUMENTALISTS:

There are many times throughout the year when other instruments are needed. A well-played instrument can greatly add to the beauty of the liturgical celebration. Whether available regularly, or “as needed”, instrumentalists are encouraged to share their musical talents with the parish community.

Instrumentalists should have a strong musical background and be proficient on their instrument. Reading music is a must. Transposition skills are also helpful tools for the church instrumentalist. A brief audition is required.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- Anyone wishing to participate in Music Ministry at Our Lady of Mercy is highly encouraged to become a member of the parish.
- Anyone is welcome to stop by a rehearsal and sit in just to “check it out.”

REHEARSALS

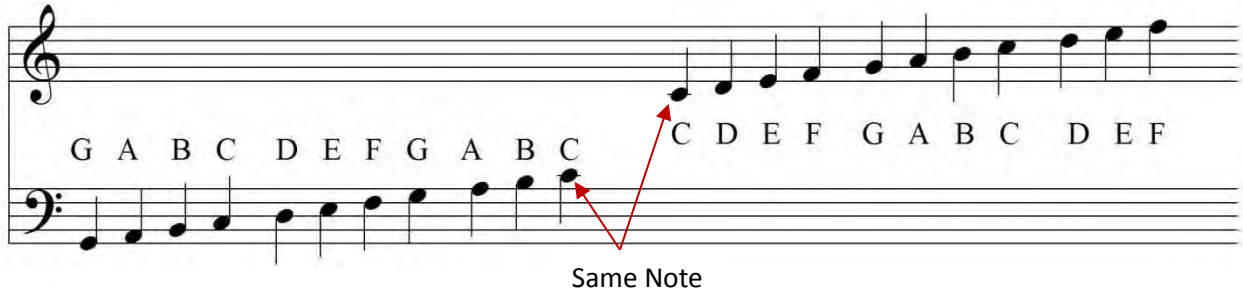
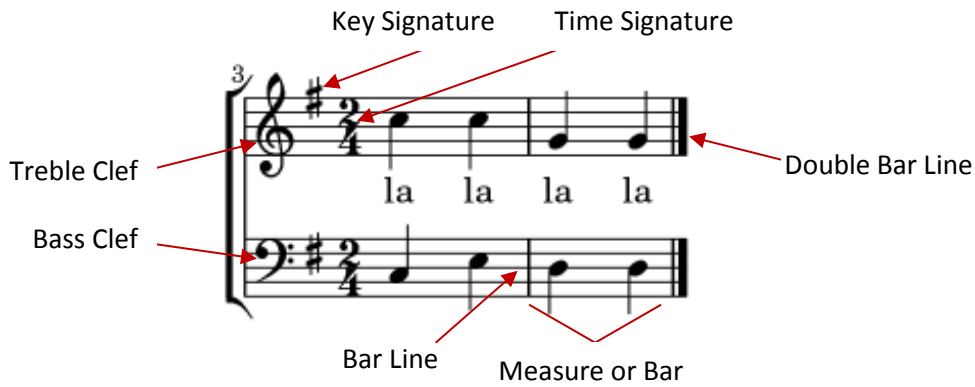
- Rehearsal is a very important part of leading the assembly in song. Music Ministers are expected to **attend scheduled rehearsals on a regular basis** in order to participate in OLM’s choirs/ensembles.
- If you are **unable to attend rehearsal** due to sickness, work/school obligations, etc., please inform the director and write your name on the calendar in the work room behind the sanctuary. If at all possible, this should be done prior to the dates you will be absent.
- It is helpful for Music Ministers to **review their music** prior to coming to rehearsal.
- Music Ministers should **arrive a few minutes early for rehearsals**. Be in place and ready to sing/play when rehearsal begins. Instruments should allow time to set up and tune. Arriving when rehearsal is scheduled to start is to be late.
- Music Ministers should **come to rehearsal prepared** – always bring a pencil, your music folder/hymnal. Music selections are outlined seasonally (several weeks in a row), so there should be no confusion as to what music is coming up.
- **Be attentive** when other voice/instrument parts other than yours are being rehearsed. Much can be learned by listening to the other sections of the ensemble. Mark your music with a pencil and/or highlighter for specific directions, cues, dynamics, etc.
- **Remain attentive** when the director stops between pieces of music and when your section is not singing/playing. Too much talking wastes precious rehearsal time.
- Be **respectful and courteous** to your Director and fellow Music Ministers.
- **Suggestions or questions** are always welcome. Don’t be afraid to raise your hand and speak up.
- **Smile, pray, and have fun!**

MASS AND OTHER LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

- Dress appropriately. Business casual is appropriate for most celebrations.
- Music Ministers should **arrive at least 30 minutes prior** to Mass unless otherwise indicated by your Director. Arriving earlier than 30 minutes is especially important if you know that you need a piece of music and/or were absent at a previous rehearsal.
- As at rehearsals, **come to Mass prepared with your music in order** ready to sing/play. Instrumentalists should arrive early to set up and allow time to tune. Early arrival allows for any last minute instructions/changes to be given if needed.
- Remember that you are in full view of the entire assembly. **Avoid excessive movement or talking during Mass** as it is distracting to the assembly.
- **Be attentive** to the liturgy. Music Ministers should participate fully and enthusiastically throughout the Mass.
- **Watch the director** for cut-offs, repeated sections, and other musical instructions. Music Ministers must be flexible and stay on their toes.
- Music Ministers should always be listening for the singing of the assembly. Your job is to **encourage the congregation's musical participation**.

BASIC MUSIC THEORY – QUICK REFERENCE

i. The Staff



ii. Key Signatures



- A sharp (#) raises pitch 1 half step; a double sharp (x) raises the pitch 2 half steps (1 whole step)
- A flat (β) lowers pitch 1 half step; a double flat (ββ) lowers the pitch 2 half steps (1 whole step)

iii. Time Signatures

- The top note defines how many beats there are per measure
 - "4" on top means there are four beats per measure

- “3” on top means there are three beats per measure
- The bottom note defines what type of note equals one beat
 - “2” on bottom means a half note gets the beat
 - “4” on bottom means a quarter note gets the beat
 - “8” on bottom means an eighth note gets the beat

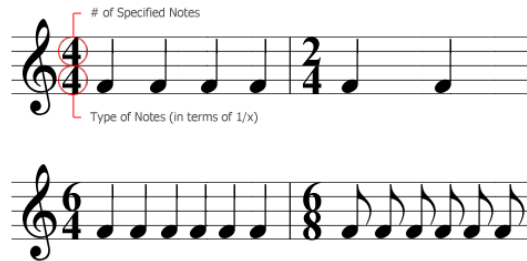


Fig.10 Time Signatures

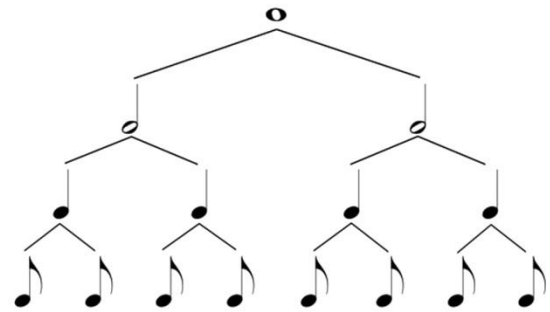
- 4/4 time is also called “common time” represented by a “C”
- 2/2 time is also called “cut time” represented by a “C”



Common Time

iv. Note Symbols and Values

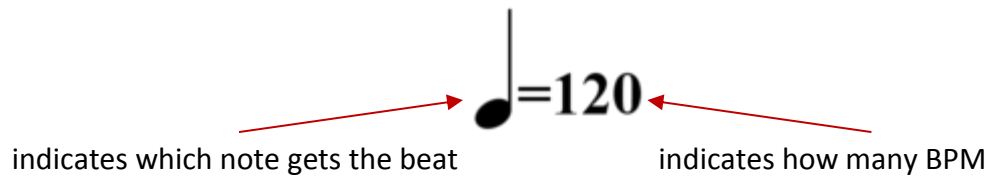
Name	Note	Rest	Value
Whole Note			4 beats
Half Note			2 beats
Quarter Note			1 beat
Eighth Note			½ beat
Sixteenth Note			¼ beat



- A dot “.” after a note means to add half of the note’s value (ie: a dotted half note gets 3 beats; a dotted quarter note gets 1½ beats)

v. Tempo

- BPM = beats per minute typically between 40 – 200; can range anywhere from 10 – 400



- Other Markings
 - **Largo** – slowly, broadly (45-50 BPM)
 - **Adagio** – slow and stately (55-65 BPM)
 - **Andante** – walking pace (70-80 BPM)
 - **Moderato** – moderately (85-95 BPM)
 - **Allegro** – fast and bright (105-130 BPM)
 - **Vivace** – fast and lively (130-140 BPM)
 - **Presto** – very fast (165-175 BPM)

- Tempo Changes
 - **ritardando** (*rit.*) – gradually get slower
 - **rallentando** (*rall.*) – gradually get slower
 - **accelerando** (*accel.*) – gradually get faster
 - **piu mosso** – with more movement, slightly faster
 - **a tempo** – go back to the original speed
 - **poco** – a little bit
 - **poco a poco** – little by little

vi. **Articulation**

- Accents



martelato marcato tenuto

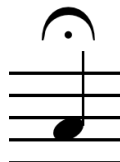
There are several types of **accent** marks. Each type indicates slightly different ways of singing or playing a note. In general, they mean to stress that particular note or give it a more percussive attack.

- Staccato



This means to sing or play the note short and disconnected from the rest of the line.

- Fermata



This means a note should be sustained longer than its value indicates.

- Trill



A **trill** is a rapid alternation between two adjacent notes.

- Ties and Slurs



Ties connect two or more notes of the same pitch. These notes are played or sung as a single note whose value is the sum of the notes tied together.

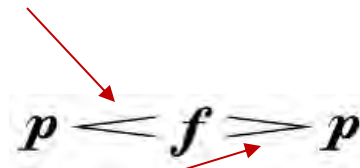


Slurs indicate a phrase that should be sung or played without separation. Vocally, they often indicate which notes are to be sung on a single syllable.

vii. Dynamics

<i>ppp</i>	pianississimo	=	extremely soft
<i>pp</i>	pianissimo	=	very soft
<i>p</i>	piano	=	soft
<i>mp</i>	mezzo piano	=	moderately soft
<i>mf</i>	mezzo forte	=	moderately loud
<i>f</i>	forte	=	loud
<i>ff</i>	fortissimo	=	very loud
<i>fff</i>	fortississimo	=	extremely loud

crescendo (cresc.) = gradually get louder



decrescendo (decresc.) = gradually get softer or **diminuendo** (dim.)

sfz **sforzando** = sudden strong emphasis

subito (sub) = suddenly; indicates a sudden dynamic change

viii. Repeated Sections and Measure Markings

- Repeat Sign



Play or sing through to ending repeat sign →
 ← Go back to the beginning repeat sign
 Play or sing again and continue on →

- D.C. – da capo; means “from the head”
 This indicates to return to the very beginning of the song



Play or sing through once →
 ← Return to the beginning
 and play or sing again to the end →

- D.S. – dal segno; means “from the sign”
 This indicates to return to the measure with the sign §



Play or sing through to the D.S. →
 ← Go back to the sign
 And play or sing to the end →

- Endings



Play or sing through the first ending →
 ← Repeat the section
 → (skip) → and play second ending

- Coda – means “tail”
 This typically a final ending that is added to the end of a song

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The first staff ends with a Coda sign (§). The second staff has a 'D.S. al Coda' instruction and a Coda symbol (⊕). Red arrows indicate the path: from the first staff to the second, from the second staff back to the Coda sign in the first staff, and from the Coda symbol in the second staff to the Coda section in the third staff.

Play or sing through to the D.S. and then return to the § sign.
 Continue through the section and go from the ⊕ symbol to the Coda.

- Fine – means “end”
 This marks the end of a song. The end of a song is also usually marked by a double bar line.

Fine

The image shows a single staff of musical notation with a double bar line and a 'Fine' symbol (a horizontal line with a vertical bar at the end).

PRAYER FOR MUSIC MINISTERS

Gracious and loving God,
great composer
who fills the universe with the song of life
be with us
as we share the musical talents you have given us.

Bless our voices
that we may sing of your love
with the eloquence of angels.

Bless our instruments
that we may play our prayer
in selfless harmony.

Inspire us with the gift of your Holy Spirit.
May our music be a sign of unity,
and invite your people to join
in an unending symphony of praise.

Amen.