

Minister of Music: Chris Fischer (*they/them*)

Chris came to FSA in April 2023 after serving as Pastoral Musician at Knox Presbyterian Church in Guelph for the past 17 years. At Knox, Chris was responsible for a multigenerational ministry which included a midweek Worship Arts program (ages 4-19), an adult choir, a multigenerational handbell choir, and occasional vocal and instrumental soloists. They have been working in music ministry in Anglican, Presbyterian, and United churches since 1991.

A member of the Juno-nominated Elora Singers for 12 years, Chris has participated in nine recordings, as well as tours of Eastern Ontario and Quebec, New York City, and the Maritimes. They have performed with southern Ontario's leading choirs and orchestras in major works as a tenor soloist and have served as Collaborative Pianist for the Rainbow Chorus of Waterloo-Wellington, the country's largest 2SLGBTQIA+ chorus outside of a major metropolitan centre, since 2018. In addition, they taught private piano and singing lessons for 30 years, pioneering an online vocal studio for trans and gender-nonconforming singers.

Chris holds degrees from Wilfrid Laurier University (Honours BMus in vocal performance) and Arizona State University (MM in choral conducting), as well as the diploma of Associate (ARCCO) from the Royal Canadian College of Organists. They have studied the organ with Jan Overduin, Michael Burkhardt, Kimberley Marshall, and Patricia Wright, and received the RCCO's Healey Willan Prize in 2001.

In London, Chris looks forward to building on the musical legacy of First-St. Andrew's, both in congregational worship and in outreach to the neighbourhood and city beyond our walls. Children's and youth music programs have been reimaged, as "Treblemakers" (singing, movement, and drama) and "ReBELLS" (handbells and chimes) meet weekly for food and fun. New initiatives include *Inshallah* (Arabic for "God willing"), an interfaith singing group meeting weekly at London's Trinity Lutheran Church; Inshallah sings songs of peace and justice and will take part in events supporting causes such as housing, food security, and standing with local members of the Jewish and Muslim communities against hate. Concert performances will also focus attention on urgent social and environmental concerns, beginning with the oratorio, "Considering Matthew Shepard" by Craig Hella Johnson, featuring the FSA Senior Choir, soloists, and chamber orchestra, on Sunday, April 21, 2024.

Music has a vital role in fostering intergenerational community, breaking down barriers, and instigating social transformation. At FSA, this is our vision, and all are welcome to be a part of it and join your voices with ours.