

The Music Department and Campus Ministry Office of Augsburg University are pleased to announce the 2021 Advent Vespers theme, “Angel Voices, Again Now Sing.” We look forward to celebrating the 2021 Advent season with Auggies near and far!

The pandemic has been difficult and unpredictable; yet, amid the unknowns we have sought to safely and artistically carry forth our Vespers tradition these past two years. For 2021, we will again offer a virtual experience with a premiere video release and viewing party the first weekend of December. This tough decision was made early in the spring by the Advent Vespers team when much of the preliminary planning happens for the upcoming season. Though our hearts yearn for face-to-face connection and a full Central Lutheran Church sanctuary in Advent, we decided to proceed cautiously, seeking to mitigate risks to our communities, especially those most vulnerable among us. Despite the slow return of certain practices and gatherings that resemble pre-COVID-19 times, several factors led us to our virtual Vespers decision:

1. The unpredictable nature of the virus and potential for continued spread.
2. A vaccine for children ages 2 to 11 is not available yet and may not be until mid-fall.
3. Minnesota Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have protocols in place for singing and instrumentation that necessitate (as of now) specific spacing and distancing of singers and musicians as well as audience participants. This would limit our space capacity significantly for a December event.
4. These same MDH and CDC protocols limit rehearsal capacity of choral and orchestra students, thereby hindering curricular goals for students, including Advent Vespers preparation.
5. Space limitations and food prohibitions at Central Lutheran Church will likely stunt our ability to create an atmosphere we are accustomed to as an Augsburg community gathered in celebration.
6. We need to plan now to implement contracts and direct funding streams to make Vespers a reality. With so many unknown factors, the virtual option is fiscally responsible.
7. The safety for our students, Augsburg faculty and staff, alumni, and community members was the ultimate deciding factor.

We look forward to a live experience in 2022. In the meantime, the Advent Vespers planning team will endeavor to create a fresh virtual experience that will articulate the message of the Advent season through music, word, and song. May the sweetest angel voices stir us to rejoice in the Advent of our God.

The Advent Vespers Production Team

Dr. Kristina Boerger, music director

Pastor Justin Lind-Ayres & Pastor Babette Chatman '06, co-liturgical directors

Cathy Knutson '06 MAL, producer

AUGSBURG
UNIVERSITY.