

## **Remarks by the Band Leader Representative – In-Person Program by Colin Williamson**

Thank you, Brian and good afternoon to everyone.

I have been asked to give a brief update on the start-up and progress of the in-person band program at Woodroffe United Church on behalf of the 4 band leaders directing the in-person bands.

It is hard to believe, that we are just over halfway through our first in-person session, having completed 4 weeks of rehearsals. Time is flying.

I am happy to report that by all accounts it has been a very successful and fantastic start-up. This is in no small part due to the months of planning, organizing and efforts by our incredible ONHB Board of Directors, volunteers and our incredible Library team lead by Jacqueline Thompson.

Although it is not my place to say, I think it is safe to say that everyone is really enjoying being able to play together again. This is something all the band leaders have noticed and observed. There is pure joy in playing music in-person with other people.

All the groups have been fun to work with.

Everyone has adjusted to the very structured Covid protocols and procedures without any problems. Everyone involved is of course fully immunized and everyone completes a Covid screening before attending the rehearsal. Knock of wood, hoping that I don't jinx it.

The teams of volunteers in each band are so helpful - setting up or tearing down chairs, signing people in, opening doors and getting the HEPA filters and percussion equipment out and operational.

We have kept the windows open and run the HEPA filters pre-rehearsal, at the break and during the rehearsals. Everyone seems pretty comfortable with the spacing of the seating. Some band leaders are using microphones and amplifiers to help out with their communications.

As the weather got cooler, band members started dressing in layers appropriate to the temperature in the rehearsal rooms.

One benefit of the added protocols - band practices are starting on-time and often early.

Each of the bands have members with differing levels of ability, even though the bands are all considered "intermediate". Band leaders were prepared for this by selecting music with a wide range of technical levels. Band leaders are also programming their repertoire based on the abilities of their musicians.