



I was born in Portland and raised in West Linn. At West Linn High School I played the cello in the school orchestra and sang in the choir. I started piano lessons in about the second grade with the mother of a classmate. She referred me to the nuns at Marylhurst University near Lake Oswego when I was in the 5th grade.

When I was eight or nine years old I attended an organ concert in Vancouver by a Latvian organist. Like all good Lutheran Latvians, we sat in the back of the church, but at the intermission, the artist invited us to move towards the front. I made a beeline to the front pew so I could watch what he was doing. I was smitten and I wanted to learn the organ. At Marylhurst, the organ teacher had her eye on me. I started organ lessons shortly thereafter and studied with her until I graduated from Marylhurst in 1984 with a degree in Piano and Organ Performance. It turns out that my very first piano teacher at Marylhurst also taught my wife at Ft. Wright College in Spokane!

I have played at several churches in the Portland metro area since 1981. I played at First Immanuel from 1981 to 1983, and returned in 1988. I've been here ever since. Since 1988 I have been the accompanist of the Lutheran Choral Association in Portland as well as the director of the Scandinavian Men's Chorus. In addition, I have directed the handbell choir at First Immanuel at various times.

Being a church musician really takes a special person, one who is sensitive to the changes in the church year, playing appropriate music for the seasons and occasion. He or she must also be a team player, willing to work with the pastors and the music director to present a cohesive musical package. I think being a church musician is a higher calling than being a solo artist. It's not about the individual, although it is nice to be appreciated for the work involved in preparation for each service. It's about serving God by enhancing the worship service with the gift of music, either through solo pieces, accompanying the choir, soloists and others, or by leading the congregation in song in response to God's many blessings to us.

I am a church organist through and through. I just wish I could play at my own funeral!?!?!?