



St. Luke's East Hampton Reflections from Fr. Ben

Sept. 4, 2025

In the late 1800s, gothic architecture was all the rage. Universities, municipal buildings and urban places of worship found themselves filled with elaborate stone arches, leaded windows, and stained glass. In churches what became known as the Oxford Movement, marked by an emphasis on medieval mysticism, ancient music and high church liturgies, spread like wildfire, especially in the large cities of the day. Interestingly, the Oxford Movement was very much tied to the Social Gospel Movement which focused on caring for the needs of the poor. This meant that the most gothic of churches often had the largest of social service programs, soup kitchens, and ministries we would call outreach today. For them, gothic architecture, music, and worship were not ends in and of themselves. In a world filled with dark factories, coal smoke, and crowded tenements, those things were designed to give people a vision of beauty that would raise their spirits up and give them an experience of the presence of God.

That same idea is underneath all we do in worship, fellowship, and arts and music all year long. Hosting the fall series of the Hamptons Festival of Music isn't primarily about rental income, introducing new people to St. Luke's, or giving our own members a good time. In a world filled with chaos and uncertainty, this series is about giving people a vision of beauty that will raise their spirits up and give them an experience of the presence of God. Music fills our hearts and touches our souls. It feeds our spirits and connects us with the divine. That is why rather than being a client using our space, the Hamptons Festival of Music is a partner in ministry, serving the community and serving God at the same time. That is why I plan to be at the concerts and why I look forward to seeing you there as well.