

A recital in honor of Ellen Bowlin, DMA, who has been director/minister of music at St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church, Davenport, for 30 years, will be at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, July 30, at St. Mark, 2363 W. 3rd St. The public is welcome. Admission is free.

Among the selections will be Michael Burkhardt's "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word: Chorale Improvisation and Free Harmonizations for Organ," commissioned by the church to honor Bowlin's retirement.

Bowlin, of Moline, Illinois, started her tenure at St. Mark in 1987, when the Rev. Harvey Prinz hired her to direct the Chancel Choir and to play one of the three weekly worship services that were held at the time. Over the years the position grew to include her service as:

- Primary organist for all services
- Director of the Chancel Choir
- Director/accompanist for the Youth Choir
- Coordinator for assisting ministers
- Finding, practicing and playing with special musicians
- Author of a monthly article for the St. Mark "Life" newsletter
- Chair of the Worship and Music Committee
- Maintaining the music library
- Care and maintenance of church instruments

Bowlin also has supervised the Assistant Music director, choir accompanist, Young Ringers/Singers Director and Celebration Bells Director. She was an integral part of the team in the campaign for a pipe organ at St. Mark.

Over the years Bowlin has introduced the congregation to new hymnals and supplements along with their liturgies, hymns and worship responses. She helped the congregation appreciate global and contemporary music as well as teaching the congregation some older, unfamiliar hymns.

"For me, Ellen has been a trusted colleague in ministry," said the Rev. Travis Fisher, senior pastor at St. Mark. "She is always willing to try new approaches, music, and liturgies. Ellen is a church musician who always had the right music selected for the weekend of the liturgical year, so that the music and lessons were always tied together.

"We wish Ellen and Rev. Bob farewell and Godspeed as they begin retirement and move to Connecticut to be closer to family," he said.

Ellen has served as a church musician for 46 years. Beside St. Mark, Ellen has served these congregations: St. Paul Lutheran Chapel, Iowa City, Iowa; Church of Our Saviour-Lutheran, Manhasset, New York; Trinity Lutheran Church, Manchester, Missouri and Unity Lutheran Church, Bel-Nor, Missouri. She earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education with an emphasis in music at Concordia Teachers College (now Concordia University) River Forest, Illinois. She earned her Master of Fine Arts and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in organ performance and pedagogy from the University of Iowa.

She and her husband, the Rev. Bob Bowlin, have two children, David and Sarah, and two grandchildren.