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February 23, 2006

Fellowship of United Methodists in Music & Worship Arts

RE: Ryan Neaveill

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to recommend Ryan Neaveill to receive a scholarship from the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts. Ryan has been the director of music at Grace United Methodist Church in Decatur, Illinois, for the past three years, six months, and transferred his membership to Decatur Grace in October 2002; in August 2005, he was named as youth director.

Grace United Methodist Church has approximately 2,000 members. When Ryan Neaveill was hired as director of music, the adult choir had approximately 10 regular members, and the music program was in disarray. Through Ryan's leadership, talent and enthusiasm, the adult chancel choir has more than doubled in size, and Church members who never dreamed that he or she would ever sing in a church choir are now regular and enthusiastic choir members (I am one of those persons).

Music is an integral and vital part of any worship service. Ryan Neaveill selects and has composed and written original music for Decatur Grace regular and special services. In addition to directing the Church choir, Ryan frequently performs solo pieces or performs with small groups, bringing wonderful music to our services. Ryan has composed and arranged an introit and final musical piece which open and close each of our traditional services; for pastor appreciation Sunday, Ryan composed songs to honor each of our pastors, Danny Cox and Sara Isbell. Last Sunday, February 19, 2006, the adult chancel choir performed an original song written and composed by Ryan.

Ryan capably performs his assigned music duties; he also frequently presents music programs not required in his job duties. The Grace Church Methodist Men have a sweetheart dinner each Valentine's Day; for the past three years, Ryan and his wife, Jody, have traveled from their Champaign home on a Tuesday night to present special music for the Methodist men sweetheart dinner; the programs have been huge successes.

Ryan developed an internet web site for Grace Church and has brought technical innovations, including "Power Point" to worship services which augment and facilitate understanding. Ryan developed these initiatives without orders or direction from any Church staff person.

Since August of 2005, Ryan has capably served as youth director, in addition to his duties as director of music. He capably handles all of his present church duties while attending Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary working toward a master of arts in music ministry. Ryan Neaveill plans a career in music ministry; any church congregation will be very fortunate to have Ryan as director of music and as a leader in the faith.

Ryan Neaveill also serves as a liturgist each Sunday at the two Grace Church traditional services; he has also, on occasion, delivered the Sunday morning message. Ryan's great faith and belief in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior is evident by his delivery and the substance of his messages.

I enthusiastically recommend Ryan Neaveill as recipient of a scholarship from the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts. Ryan deserves all our encouragement, financially and otherwise, in his study to increase his understanding and faith. We will all take great pride that we have assisted Ryan in his ministry for Jesus Christ.

Sincerely,

HUGH H. ROWDEN

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