

John O'Malley:

In asking what John wanted to play, his fourth grade orchestra teacher said, "We don't have any violins left. Would you like to learn the viola?"

"OK," John replied. "But what's a viola?"

Thus began John's long association with the violin family's least recognized instrument. (A viola looks like a violin, but it's slightly larger and tuned a fifth lower. Congregations usually assume John plays violin.) After performing in the South Bend Youth Symphony, John played in the music ministry and string quartet at Little Flower Catholic Church in South Bend, Indiana for six years. John then earned a degree in Communication at Purdue.

In 1990, John began his long participation in the music ministry at St. Tom's. John plays guitar, viola, and 5-string electric violin in the Sunday 9:00 AM choir. As a choir leader, John arranges music for a large group which has included piano, guitar, bass guitar, two violins, two violas, two clarinets, flute, trumpet, and flugelhorn.

"We're not just a band," John says. "We're an orchestra!"

John also plays occasionally with the Saturday 5:30 PM choir and has performed with the Aquinas String Quartet. John founded and manages [RiteSong](#), a wedding music ensemble.

A local radio broadcaster for 10 years, John was a deejay, announcer, program host, and producer during live and pre-recorded music, sports, news, and other programming. He also engineered and hosted live sports broadcasts from facilities in five states. John can usually be found behind the audio console at big St. Tom's music events like Mass on the Grass and the annual spring concert.

John performed on "Live in the Light," St. Tom's first CD. He produced, engineered, and performed on St. Tom's second CD, "Lift Up The Child." John expects St. Tom's third CD to generate more financial support for Lafayette Urban Ministry and St. Tom's sister parish in Haiti.