

## *Feature Story* 'Harvest Moon' Group Makes Joyful Music Together for Others by Chris Brown

Making a joyful noise unto the Lord is something that Harvest Moon does well. "We're a faith-based group sharing our love of music and we're glad to have found a niche that combines the two, playing at church as well as for benefits and for audiences that can't get out too often," says Don Cook, a musician in the group and St. Joseph parishioner.

"We're all professionals in other fields, but we do this to give back, because we recognize how fortunate we are—it's both fun and fulfilling for all of us."

The core of the group has been playing together since 1989, beginning as church musicians with the name "Saints Alive." As the story goes, Don did a Beatles "lick" at the end of a normal rehearsal one night. When the others joined in, harmonizing and playing, band history took a whole new road. Although still known and active as Saints Alive when playing at Mass, the group is known as Harvest Moon for its other venues.

"We play music to tickle your memories," says Don. Their sets are family-oriented, with favorites from the 60s, 70s, and 80s—with some more contemporary numbers thrown in as well. Don is clear about the band's love for the Beatles, Who, Tom Petty, the Beatles, Neil Young, the Everly Brothers, and—just in case you missed it—the Beatles.

In addition to playing for parties, Harvest Moon treats its musical gifts as a stewardship of sorts. "We know that we're blessed and want to give back some

of our joy; we appreciate what we have while we have it," says Don. With a repertoire of 300 or more contemporary songs and an equal number of church songs, no two performances are ever the same.

Harvest Moon has been featured entertainment at many venues, including a benefit for Hurricane Katrina victims, at fundraisers for the Little Sisters of the Poor and the American Stroke Foundation, at Faith Village, and at Osawatomie State Hospital. They've also auctioned themselves off to raise money for Queen of the Holy Rosary School and provided music for a play at Conception Abbey. In addition, they play regularly at family events sponsored by the Heimhof Winery in Tonganoxie and the Baltimore Bend Winery in Waverly, Missouri.

Band members include Don, on guitar and harmonica; Wally Drone on keyboard; Maggie Rodgers on vocals, percussion, guitar, and the electric drum machine; Kay Schweiger on vocals, guitar, bass, and flute; and L.P. Lucas on vocals, guitar, and bass.

"We all love music and we're committed to maintaining our equipment and upgrading it when necessary," says Don. "We're like a family, thankful every day for each other and for that love of music."

To ensure that they stay on top of things, the band recently invested in a new Bose sound system that revolutionizes the listening experience for audiences. Don, who serves as the band's

sound wrangler, says that the system's unique way of putting out sound in waves means that music fills the room without overpowering conversation—"which is perfect for our type of music and our type of audiences." Don recently used the Harvest Moon sound system for the performance of a Christian singer at St. Joseph School—with rave reviews. "This all started with faith and grew into something wonderful, for which we are thankful every day," Don says. He adds that the band loves it when parishioners come out to see them.

For more information about Harvest Moon, along with a schedule of events, visit the band online at [www.harvestmoonkc.com](http://www.harvestmoonkc.com).



From left, L.P. Lucas, Kay Schweiger, Don Cook, Maggie Rodgers, Wally Drone. (Photo by Joe Borders)