



The Misericordia University Community Choir

Spring 2021

About the Choir



The Misericordia University Community Choir, now in its fifth season, was formed in the fall of 2017 to bring choral music back to campus. The choir is directed by Matthew Rupcich with the support of the Center for Adult & Continuing Education and Fine Arts Department.

The choir is a mixed ensemble (alto, tenor, soprano, and bass) currently consisting of 24 members. The group rehearses every Thursday evening during the spring and fall semesters. All rehearsals and performances are currently virtual due to the pandemic. New members are welcome for the fall 21 and spring 22 semesters.

In addition to an end-of-the-semester concert each academic year, the choir performs at Misericordia's homecoming, games, the annual veterans' appreciation event, and for other events and programs such as the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders baseball games and WBRE-TV's holiday show.

The spring virtual performance is entitled "Faith Hope, and Love." The repertoire includes: She Sings (Amy Bernon), This is My Father's World (Arr. Elaine Hagenberg), and For the Beauty of the Earth (John Rutter). To enjoy the concert, and to join, visit www.misericordia.edu/communitychoir.

Our Director

Matthew Rupcich is completing his 5th year as conductor of the Misericordia University Community Choir. In addition, he is the interim music director of the Arcadia Chorale (Scranton, PA), music director at First Presbyterian Church (Hawley, PA), conductor of the Tri-State Chorale (Milford, PA), music director with the Delaware Valley Opera Company (Narrowsburg, NY), and the conductor and music director of the Rockland Camerata (Pearl River, NY).

Matthew was an adjunct professor of choral music at Hunter College (CUNY) in New York City from 2006 – 2016. He served as the concert and choral director for the Blue Hill Troupe of New York City from 2005 – 2012, Matthew has conducted at West Point, The Richard Rodgers Theater, The Metropolitan Museum, Avery Fisher Hall, and the Buxton Opera House in England.

Matthew has a private voice studio in Rockland County, NY, at the Rockland Conservatory and at home in Hawley, PA. At the age of eighteen, Matthew was the youngest person ever admitted to the Chicago Symphony Chorus under the direction of Margaret Hillis. Matthew is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory of Music of the Johns Hopkins University. He holds a Masters in choral conducting from the University of Maryland.

Our Members

Cheri Balmer (Alto) first heard about the choir through Facebook. She is a Misericordia alum (class of 2009) with a degree in psychology. Cheri now works as a school psychologist. Her prior choir experience includes school, church, and community theater. Her hobbies include cycling, running, and reading.



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Kendra Balmer (Alto) sang for the Lake-Lehman and Dallas High School Choirs and Temple University. She was a conductor for Temple University Choirs, South West Leadership Academy Charter School Choir, Universal Daroff Charter School Choirs, Girard Academic Music Program Choirs, Project Home Choir of Philadelphia, Quarrymen of Fish Hoek Male Choir, Armani of Cape Town Choir, Xiquitsi of Maputo Choir, Widener University Choir, and the Russell Byers Charter School Choir. Her hobbies include traveling, dancing, and crochet.

Hannah Baloga (Soprano) first joined the choir in 2017. She is a student at Luzerne County Community College majoring in graphic design. Her prior choir experience includes her high school choir. Hannah's hobbies include art, drawing, and graphic design.

Laura Baut (Tenor) is a graduate of Misericordia University. She did not have any choir experience until she joined the MU Community Choir. Her hobbies outside of the choir include reading and traveling.

Jessica DeReemer (Alto) is a returning member and an MU student majoring in English Education. She has been involved in choirs since middle school. Her hobbies include reading and writing.

Donna Dickinson (Soprano) has been with the choir since its beginning. She is a member of the King's College administrator board. Her prior choir experience includes Choral Arts of Luzerne County, Showcase & Little Theater, and COCU & Shavertown Church Choir. Her hobbies include baking, reading, photography, and walking.

Merry Ann Edwards (Alto) is a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative. Her prior choir experience includes multiple church choirs, as well as multiple community choirs. Her hobbies include golf, skiing, and biking.

Owen Ferik (Tenor) works as a mechanical engineer by day and enjoys singing by night. His prior choir experience goes back to high school and his time at Lehigh University. His hobbies include musical theater and landscaping.

Karen Fry (Alto) is a retired social worker. Her prior choir experience includes membership in other area community choirs. Her hobbies include gardening, yoga, reading, and exercise.

Charles Grube (Bass) has been with the choir since 2018. He also serves as a local pastor. His prior choir experience includes singing in church, high school, in college, and with other community choirs. His hobbies include the outdoors and woodworking.

Jean Grube (Tenor) is a voice teacher and youth choir director. Her prior choir experience includes the Choral Society of NEPA, Choral Arts at Misericordia, Chautauqua Motet Choir, Tiadaughton Musicale, Susquehanna University Choir, Susquehanna University Chamber Singers, All State Chorus, and All Eastern Chorus. Her hobbies include genealogy, photography, painting, antique-hunting, church art & environment, sewing, baking, and Dachshunds.

Marian Holehan (Alto) is a graduate of College Misericordia College with a degree in Foods and Nutrition (1986). A retired dietitian. Her prior choir experience includes New Community Singers (since the mid 1980's), Wyoming County Chorale, Choral Arts of Luzerne County, Choral Society of NE PA, and Barbershop Harmony Society. Her hobbies include antiques, nutrition research, travel, and trying new things.

Frank Kasmark (Bass) has a career as a physician assistant. His prior experience includes being a part of a church choir. His hobbies include woodworking and working with stained glass.



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Evelyn Kersey (Alto) is a retired college administrator. She has sung in church choir since age 5, as well as college choir, and many community groups in NEPA (Robert Dale Chorale, Oratorio Society, etc.). She was active onstage at the Music Box Playhouse from 1984 to 2008. Her hobbies include cooking, reading, gardening, travel, her grandkids, dogs, crossword and jigsaw puzzles, and church/community volunteer work.

Rebecca Oley (Soprano) volunteers in education and music programs (UMC) in Shavertown, PA. Her prior choir experience includes the PA District, Regional, and State Chorus and the Indiana University of Pennsylvania University Choir. She is the program and music director of the Vacation Bible School at Shavertown United Methodist Church where she is also a choir member. Her hobbies include cooking sewing, gardening, choral music, and reading.

Susan Paukstis (Soprano) is a first-time member, having heard about the choir through her brother, Choir Director Matthew Rupcich. Her prior choir experience includes St. Bernard's, St. Francis of Assisi, Holy Name Cathedral, and St. Jude's. Her hobbies include yoga, reading, and watching movies.

Deron Ranck (Tenor) first joined the choir the fall 2020 semester. He is a Misericordia University student majoring in secondary education with a concentration in mathematics. His prior choir experience includes being a part of a school choir 5th to 12th grades. His hobbies include writing song lyrics, math, and of course, singing!

Donna Rupcich (Alto) is a new member of the choir, thanks to her brother Choir Director Matthew Rupcich. Her prior choir experience includes Elizabeth Seton High School / St. Joseph On the Rio Grande Choirs. Her hobbies include painting, swimming, singing, camping, hiking, and fishing.

Marc Scott (Bass), a musician, joined the choir this spring semester. His prior choir experience includes his high school choir in Camden, NJ, along with his church choir. He sang with Suzette Ortiz in Ghana, Temple University Singing Owls, Armani Choir and Cape Town South Africa. His hobbies include traveling, cooking, and streaming games.

Olivia Sherrick (Soprano) is currently studying at Luzerne County Community College to become a court reporter. Her prior choir experience includes high school choir (Grades 7-12), high school concert choir (Grades 11-12), district chorus (Grade 12), and regionals (Grade 12). Her hobbies include singing, playing piano, reading, spending time with family and pets, going outside, cooking, and traveling.

Nancy Thaler (Alto) is a 1971 graduate of College Misericordia with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music. Her prior choir experience includes college (choral) and high school (as an accompanist). Her hobbies include gardening, piano, and reading.

Jacob Thomas (Tenor) first heard about the choir through friends. He started with the choir while still in high school and is now a freshman at Misericordia. His prior experience includes participating in his church and other choirs His hobbies include playing the guitar and music.

Michael Vitale (Tenor) first heard the choir practicing one Thursday evening and asked about joining. He is a retired school psychologist. His hobbies include piano and golf.

Alexa Wolfgang (Soprano) joined the choir in the fall of 2019. She is currently a junior at Misericordia, majoring in occupational therapy. Her prior choir experience includes her high school choir, honors choir, and church choir. Her hobbies include sketching, painting, singing, listening to music, and reading.