



ROCKFORD CHORAL UNION*

2025 Fall Newsletter

From Our President...

Greetings, Choristers of the Rockford Choral Union,

It's that time of year as we begin to draw our attention to this year's Thanksgiving weekend *Messiah* performances on November 29th and 30th. Last year we received rave reviews, with attendance being the highest it's been in the last several years. Our patrons enjoyed the professional presentations and the outstanding acoustics in our beautiful venue, Emmanuel Lutheran Church. One local musician told me that she was so enthralled with last year's Saturday afternoon performance that she shot out of her seat immediately after Mike's cutoff, realizing once standing that she was the first person to stand - overcoming her usual reluctance to be the first to respond. Our desire is that you all will be equally moved as we present the message of redemption through God's love.

Our rehearsal schedule last year was different from previous years in that we had only five rehearsals instead of the usual six. We will continue with five Sunday rehearsals, with the understanding that rehearsals start exactly at 2:00 P.M.* and conclude approximately at 4:15 P.M. We welcome your participation practicing and performing with us. The expectation is that each of us will attend all five rehearsals, with absences being allowed only for the most dire circumstances. Again we have the honor of having Mike Beert with us as each of us dig deeper within ourselves to offer to God, through our music, the most pleasurable gift He has given to us. We are offering that gift back to Him as our stewardship. Rehearsals will begin Sunday, October 26th. (See the practice schedule on the reverse side.)

Please join us this year if you are able. The registration form is available for download from our website: <https://rockfordchoralunion.com>. Dues are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students aged 18 and under. Again, a very warm welcome, Singers!

Peace, Dale Johnson, President of RCU

***Registering and paying your dues starting at 1:15 P.M. before the first two rehearsals or during the break is recommended.**

We need your help!

Please help promote our MESSIAH performances through social media, your church, places of business, etc. Tell your friends!

From Our Director...

Greetings, Esteemed Choir!

As we prepare ourselves for another season of life at church, at home, and in our daily lives, let me thank you again for the absolutely wonderful performances of *Messiah* last November. I am grateful for all of the hard work, commitment, confidence, and adaptability you showed last year. Each year gives us more reasons to be thankful in mind, body, and spirit.

Handel's Messiah is a wonderful tradition that we share with each other and with our audiences. Yes, *Messiah* is a tradition but one that breathes and changes every time we approach it. The work is so deep, like many masterpieces, we draw from it something new each time we sing it. Handel was one of the few composers Mozart actually revered and studied. His appreciation for Handel and *Messiah* was so great that he re-orchestrated the piece using more modern instruments (adding flute, clarinet and horns). Why? I am not sure, but Mozart loved it enough that he believed the work would be more "fresh" and inspire more audiences. If Mozart liked it, we should too!

In my mind, I prefer the more original and Baroque version as it is more transparent and allows the text of the work to shine through. That is our job as a choir: to bring the text of *Messiah*—from Isaiah to Revelation—to as many people as we can. I agree with Mozart in his reverence for Handel's music: the beauty is in the music and its perfect marriage to the text.

As you know, we have a great orchestra and wonderful soloists. However, in most oratorios, the real weight lies in the hands of the choir. The choir is responsible for much of the message, the forward momentum, and the thrilling dynamic work and fantastic counterpoint. As I have said every year, we get better and better in taking on this responsibility and giving God's gift to us, Jesus Christ, to ourselves, our families, and the community.

I look forward to working with you!

Sincerely, Mike Beert, Director



<https://rockfordchoralunion.com/>
www.facebook.com/rockfordchoralunion

*Established in 1945 as Rockford Lutheran Choral Union

**Rockford Choral Union is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Sponsorship...

While an active, singing membership in the RCU is a wonderful way to support our productions of MESSIAH, becoming a sponsor as well will also help our productions financially. When your name is listed as a sponsor in the program, it gives evidence of support for others to see and will also encourage them to add **their** support. No donation is too LARGE! Please consider the following:

- **If you would like to be a sponsor**, a gift of \$20 or more will allow us to list your name in the program. Make checks* payable to the **Rockford Choral Union**. Be sure to note how you want your name listed. Your name can be listed as a Sponsor, as a Business, "In Honor Of," or "In Memory Of" someone. We also have Special Donor listings for gifts of \$100 or more. The deadline for a gift to be received for listing in the program is Sunday, November 9, 2025. Bring your donation to a rehearsal or send it directly to Rockford Choral Union, P.O. Box 8412, Rockford, Illinois 61126.
- **Contact Dale Johnson if you are a Thrivent policyholder**. Thrivent has two charitable donation paths open to 501(c)(3) entities like RCU, and they can guide you through the process with your agent.
- **Estate planning**. Please make MESSIAH/RCU a part of your legacy with a bequest.
- **If you are age 70-1/2 or older**, consider making a Qualified Charitable Distribution with RCU as the recipient. Contact your financial adviser for more information.

Your funding helps RCU reach our financial goals. Thank you.

—Cyndee Lipps, Sponsorship

***ONLINE donation/sponsorship is now available; scan the QR at right.**



In Memoriam...

The 2025 MESSIAH concerts will be dedicated to the following RCU singer:
Billie Jean Boute

Rehearsal Aid: ChordPerfect!

Attention: RCU Singers! Struggling with melismas? Octave jumps? Just can't find that note? Help is available at ChordPerfect! Just go to <https://www.chordperfect.com/george-handel>, select "MESSIAH – 1741 HWV 56," and click on the link for your voice part. You can hear all four parts and the orchestration for each chorus, but your voice part is prominent.

From The Board

If you or someone you know would like to hear one of our performances but is unable to attend a live performance, we will be livestreaming both performances on our Facebook page. Access the internet on your mobile device, TV streaming device, or computer, then go to this link: www.facebook.com/rockfordchoralunion. Click on the link provided to view the livestream event. The livestream will start shortly before 3:00pm, and the music will start at 3:00pm.

Due to circumstances beyond our control, some people might experience technical difficulties accessing Facebook or the livestream with their device. If you experience difficulties, try <https://www.facebook.com/help> to see if Facebook has the answer to your question, or a solution to your technical problem.

If you are unable to access the livestream, videos of both performances will be available at a later date on our website at <https://rockfordchoralunion.com> and our YouTube page (<https://www.youtube.com/@rockfordchoralunionmessiah2404>).

Dues are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students (18 and under)

Practice Schedule 2025*

**October 26Rehearsal 2–4:15 pm	November 23Rehearsal 2–4:15 pm
**November 2Rehearsal 2–4:15 pm	November 28Final Rehearsal..... 7 pm
November 9Rehearsal 2–4:15 pm	November 291st Performance 3 pm
November 16Rehearsal 2–4:15 pm	November 302nd Performance 3 pm

**New members singing MESSIAH for the first time are welcome to join the chorus.
Registration will start at 1:15 p.m. for the first two rehearsals.

*Two excused absences are allowed

All rehearsals and performances are at **Emmanuel Lutheran Church**, 920 3rd Avenue, Rockford, Illinois.