



ROCKFORD CHORAL UNION*

2026 Fall Newsletter



From Our President...

Greetings, Choristers of the Rockford Choral Union:

It's that time of year to draw our attention to the Rockford Choral Union's MESSIAH performances on November 28 and 29, which will be our 80th year of presenting Handel's oratorio. Again, last year we received rave reviews, the highest they have been in the last several years. Emmanuel Lutheran Church's beautiful acoustics and ease of parking enhance the experience for our attendees. Our goal is to present the message of redemption through God's love as a gift to our community.

Our rehearsal schedule will be like last year. Each of the five Sunday rehearsals will start exactly at 2:00 P.M.* and conclude approximately at 4:15 P.M. We enthusiastically welcome your participation in practicing (beginning October 25) 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 are honored to have Mike Beert as our conductor, as each of us dig deeper within ourselves to share with our listeners the gift of music that God has given us. With our MESSIAH performances, we are returning that gift back to Him. It is our stewardship.

Please join us this year. You can download the registration form from our website: www.rockfordchoralunion.com. Dues are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students eighteen 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, RCU Chorus!

Here we are again, preparing our hearts and minds for another Handel's MESSIAH. Our lives are busy with a new season: school, church, children, grandchildren, jobs, and just life in general. The inclusion of this music and the preparation of it puts one more thing into our busy schedules. I remember one teacher I worked with saying, "If you want something done, give it to someone who's already busy." How true.

However, what better way to prepare our way for the Lord? Our collective response, whether singing or praying, helps us center our lives. Handel just made it simpler in some ways. No, it is not easy to sing 15-16 chorus numbers with unbelievable text and music, all in time with 75 other musicians, but the collective result is one of the most glorious enterprises we can do in our lives. Not only for ourselves but for our audiences and the people in our community.

I am always amazed at how well the parts are learned as we come together. We are learning such things as balance, ensemble singing, diction, and musicality. I am truly blessed by all of you that we get to make music and present the message of one of the most glorious stories ever written. I can tell from our rehearsals that you feel the same way.

Can we do it better? Always. Was it in need of fixing last year? By no means. I was extremely pleased with the performance and your improvement in all areas, especially in regards to diction. Even those people who have heard it performed by us many times have commented to me on our musicality and how much the text came out. We will build on our strengths and success.

We have, as always, a strong orchestra and soloists with us again this year. But over the years, I have come to believe it is the chorus that tells the story – you do the heavy lifting! I am super excited to work with all of you again, and it is my pleasure to say that I get to work with all of 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 by Sunday, November 8, 2026, will allow us to list your name in the program. Make checks payable to the **Rockford Choral Union**. Bring your donation to a rehearsal or send it directly to Rockford Choral Union, P.O. Box 8412, Rockford, Illinois 61126.
- **Be sure to note how you want your name listed**. In all payment methods, you have the option of listing your name 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. Again, the deadline for a gift to be received for listing in the program is **Sunday, November 8, 2026**.
- **†If you prefer**, you can instead donate/sponsor online. See the QR below.
- **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 73 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 2026 MESSIAH concerts will be dedicated to the following RCU singers:
Mary "Peg" Miller, Mary E. Norman, and Richard James Todd

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 2026*

**October 25Rehearsal	2–4:15 pm	November 22Rehearsal	2–4:15 pm
**November 1Rehearsal	2–4:15 pm	November 27	Final Rehearsal..... 7 pm
November 8Rehearsal	2–4:15 pm	November 28	1st Performance..... 3 pm
November 15Rehearsal	2–4:15 pm	November 29	2nd Performance..... 3 pm

**New members singing MESSIAH for the first time are welcome to join the chorus.

*Two excused absences are allowed.

Registration will start at 1:15 p.m. for the first two rehearsals.

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