

Hallelujah Chorus

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
 For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
 For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
 The kingdom of this world
 Is become the kingdom of our Lord,
 And of His Christ, and of His Christ;
 And He shall reign for ever and ever,
 For ever and ever, forever and ever,
 King of kings, and Lord of lords,
 King of kings, and Lord of lords,
 And Lord of lords,
 And He shall reign,
 And He shall reign forever and ever,
 King of kings, forever and ever,
 And Lord of lords,
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
 And He shall reign forever and ever,
 King of kings! and Lord of lords!
 And He shall reign forever and ever,
 King of kings! and Lord of lords!
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

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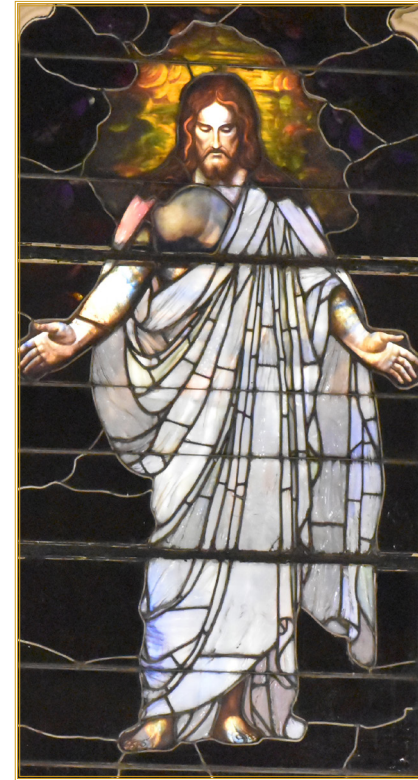
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79th Annual Messiah

by George Frideric Handel



Michael Beert, Conductor

Saturday, November 29, 2025 3:00pm

Sunday, November 30, 2025 3:00pm

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

920 Third Avenue, Rockford

presented by the
**ROCKFORD
 CHORAL
 UNION**

The year 1945 marked the end of a horrible war and the beginning of the rebuilding of lives, homes, and dreams for millions of Americans. The return to peacetime initiated the vision of several local Lutheran churches to gather singers together to prepare a presentation of Handel's *Messiah* as a gift to the community. This group became the Rockford Lutheran Choral Union, today known as the Rockford Choral Union, and its message remains a living testament to the One who came to bring hope and peace to the world.

Today, over forty churches and organizations are represented. Singers include first-timers and those who have been with the chorus 10, 15, 20 years and longer. Members come from within a 50+ mile radius of Rockford, committing to five Sunday afternoon rehearsals.

Many years have come and gone, and (*except for 2020*) every Thanksgiving weekend, the glorious sound of that great work has continued uninterrupted. What motivates us? We all love to sing and present great music. We have a need to retell the story of Christ, the Messiah, to our community. We desire to sing of the true Christmas message that spans the life of Christ from the cradle to the cross and, ultimately, the crown.

We are grateful for the many people, churches, and businesses that provide financial support to the Rockford Choral Union through their sponsorships, memorials, and special gifts. This enables us to continue the concerts and to provide the best soloists and chamber orchestra to augment our great volunteer chorus.

The Rockford Choral Union thanks you for your presence, financial support, encouraging words, and kind comments.

Our prayer is that you will leave this concert enriched and better prepared for Christmas.

More information available on our website:

<https://rockfordchoralunion.com>



We are on Facebook!

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In Honor Of Nat Bauer by Anonymous

In Honor Of Our Children and Granddaughters
by David and Sue Coers

In Honor Of Howard and Erma Jensen by Bob and Jane Burden

In Honor Of Our Messiah, Jesus Christ -
Worthy of all Praise and Glory
by Paul and Barbara Taylor

In Honor Of Lois Elizabeth Marie Rolander, 103 years old,
by her Family

In Honor Of Janet Swanson by her Family



In Memory Of Garnet Ackerman by Larry Ackerman
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 by the Dale Johnson Family
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 In Memory Of Kate Cieslak by Michael Cieslak
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 In Memory Of Mrs. Margaret Dameier by her Children
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 In Memory Of Chuck and Vivian Hansen by Scott and Cindy Jensen
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 and Cyndee Lipps, – 'sisters of the heart'
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 by the Dale Johnson Family
 In Memory Of Ken Kling by Kathy Roushey
 In Memory Of Janet Lavelle, wife, and Katherine Hogan, daughter,
 by husband/father Donald Lavelle
 In Memory Of Loretta Lipps by Victoria Girard
 In Memory Of Loved Ones by Kenneth and Cynthia Lipps
 In Memory Of John F. McNamara by Barbara R. McNamara
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Michael Beert is now in his seventh year as the music director of the Rockford Choral Union. Michael has been involved as cellist with the Choral Union since 1985 and became its seventh conductor after the retirement of Nat Bauer in 2017.

Michael has been playing cello for over 55 years. He has played with the Rockford Symphony Orchestra for over 35 years and has been Principal Cello for the past fifteen seasons.

His conducting experiences include guest appearances with the Illinois Philharmonic, the Illinois Valley Symphony, music director of the Rockford Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Rock Valley College and Community Orchestra, and the Rockford Park District's Summer Pops Orchestra. Mike has been a past recipient of the Mendelssohn Performing Arts Center's "Starr of Excellence Award."

Mike has his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Cello Performance from Roosevelt University and has extensive post-graduate courses in String Pedagogy, Cello and Bass, Music History/Literature, and Conducting from Northern Illinois University and the University of Memphis.

Mike is a retired Professor of Music and Academic Chair from Rock Valley College after teaching there for 35 years. He is married to Concertmistress Rachel Handlin, and their daughter, Aria, is the mezzo-soprano soloist this year.

*Performances are given in memory of Billie Jean Boute
and our U.S. Military Service men and women.*

Officiating Pastors

Saturday Afternoon Rev. Caleb Hong
Christ United Methodist Church
Sunday Afternoon Dr. Larry Correll
Riverside Community Church

Chamber Orchestra

<i>Violin I</i>	<i>Viola</i>	<i>Bassoon</i>
Rachel Handlin –	Ella McGlynn	Lynnette Sawyer
Concertmistress	Hannah Lamm	<i>Oboe</i>
Brandon Lamm	<i>Cello</i>	Kristine Mertens
Annaliesa Caswell	Kerena Fox	Matthew Guschl
<i>Violin II</i>	<i>Bass</i>	<i>Timpani</i>
Anna Gillan	Weldon Anderson	Scott Mertens
Rachel Hofman		
Lisa Chodorowski		

Accompanists

Wayne Hatwich, Organ
Jean Anderson, Harpsichord
Mark Baldin, Trumpet
Cynthia McGrath, Rehearsal Accompanist

Concert Etiquette Reminder

Please silence cell phones and refrain from leaving or entering the Sanctuary during performances out of courtesy for the audience, musicians, and singers. Thank you for your consideration!

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

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Emmanuel Lutheran	St. Paul Lutheran (<i>Dixon</i>)
First Free Rockford	St. Rita Catholic
First Presbyterian (<i>Dixon</i>)	St. Joseph Catholic (<i>Peru</i>)
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Mt. Olive Lutheran	Unitarian Universalist
Nielsen Chorale	United Methodist (<i>Rochelle</i>)
New Apostolic Church	Westminster Presbyterian
Old Stone Church	Windsor Baptist
Our Lady of the Assumption	Zion Lutheran (<i>Belvidere</i>)
Our Savior's Lutheran (<i>Beloit, WI</i>)	Zion Lutheran (<i>Marengo</i>)
Pecatonica United Methodist	

Soprano Amy Conn is known for her pure tone, communicative warmth, and musical intelligence. Performances have included Samuel Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*; Reinhold Gliere's *Concerto for Coloratura and Orchestra*; Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* and *Exsultate, jubilate*; Faure's *Requiem*; Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, *Mass in B Minor*, and *Coffee Cantata*; Handel's *Theodora*, *La Resurrezione*, and *Israel in Egypt*; Orff's *Carmina Burana*; and Haydn's *Creation*.



Ms. Conn has been a featured soloist with Musica Angelica in Los Angeles, the Rockford Symphony Orchestra, Music of the Baroque, Baroque Band, the Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra, the Alabama Symphony, Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra, Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Elgin Symphony Orchestra. On stage, she has sung lead roles in *Acis and Galatea*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Yeomen of the Guard*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*.

She also enjoys musical theater and has appeared as Jack's Mom in *Into the Woods* and Jane Goodall's Mum in the children's musical *Me...Jane*.

Throughout her career, Amy has been a committed recitalist and chamber musician and now serves as Chair of the Board of Art Song Chicago.

Aria Beert Mezzo

Aria Beert, mezzo soprano, hails from Rockford, Illinois. As a soon-to-be graduate from Wichita State University, with a Bachelors degree in violin and vocal performance, she has thrilled audiences with a variety of roles on the stage.



Her most notable roles were in *Le Nozze di Figaro* as Cherubino and *The Consul* as the Secretary.

Over this past summer she attended the Opera Lucca summer program in Italy where she was a cover in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and a soloist in their scenes program.

Upcoming performances include soloist singer with the Nielsen Chorale in their performance of John Rutter's *Gloria* in April.

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Karin Blaski
Laura Caswell
Mia Chase
Kyra DeBerry
Cindy Fischer
Chloe Fisk
Sherry Fraser

Susan Gilbaugh
Jenny Graham
Sandra Hogan
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Kimberly Nicolosi
Kathleen Peterson
Tasha Petre
Brenda Ray

Tamara Ray
Lynda Remling
Allison Roberts
Amy Salamon
Jane Teders
Mary Trujillo
Jean Wittlief

Altos

Karin Bohr
Dawn Calkins
Barbara Connors
Lois Eckburg
Shirley Fischer
Teresa Gobeli
Ruth Gray
Bonita Harn
Karin Jacobsen

Mary Miller
Christine Mothkovich
Sasha Pogwizd
Carin Richter
Cathy Ritts
Martha Rolf
Kathy Roushey
Kathryn Rundblade
Carrie Somoso

Lydia Stevens
Sylvia Stevens
Linda Todd
Elsie Viall
Kate Viall
Lydia Weinreich
Diane Wilke
Jan Winterhalter

Tenors

Tom Allabaugh
Joseph Bruce
Susan Coers
Peter Cooper
Cindy Jensen

Robert Johnson
Tamara Ross
Jami Shaver
Andrew Stacy

Antoinette Vella
Loyd Wollstadt
Rhee Ellen Wright

Basses

Titus Berndt
Gene Dameier
Dale Johnson
Kim Keutzer
F. Patrick LaSalle

Michael Leitz
George Lisensky
John Stelter
Webb Stevens
Dick Todd

Adam Viall
Richard Wang
Tim Weeden
Richard Wittlief

(Some members listed may be unable to sing this year)

Michael Day-Toles Tenor

Lyric tenor Michael Day-Toles is from Rockford, Illinois. Michael has sung with companies such as Michigan Opera Theatre, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, the Merola Opera Program, Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Syracuse Opera, and Livermore Valley Opera.

Opera credits include Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Candide (*Candide*), Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*), Alfred (*Die Fledermaus*), and Arcadio (*Florencia en el Amazonas*).

Michael recently earned a J.D. from the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law and currently resides in Chicago, where he works as an attorney.



Nicolai Janitzky Bass

Baritone Nicolai Janitzky is a native of Northern California and currently resides in the Rockford area. He began his career with the Santa Fe Opera Young Artist Program, where he went on in the title role in *Eugene Onegin* on short notice. Since then, he has appeared with many opera companies in the United States and abroad, including San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera, and Musica Viva in Hong Kong.



He has performed many roles from the operas of Mozart, Donizetti, Verdi, and Puccini, and he has a particular interest in Russian repertoire. In addition to opera, he enjoys performing art songs and has given recitals through the Marilyn Horne Foundation and other organizations at the

Cleveland Institute of Music's Art Song Festival, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., and Carnegie (Weill) Hall in New York City.

His recent concerts include baritone soloist in *Carmina Burana*, Brahms's *Requiem*, and Mussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death*.

He studied at Yale University Opera Program and Music Academy of the West.

Messiah

by George Frideric Handel

PART ONE: The Prophetied and Promised Redeemer

Orchestra:	Overture
Recitative (<i>Tenor</i>):	Comfort ye my people (<i>Is. 40:1-3</i>)
Aria (<i>Tenor</i>):	Ev'ry valley shall be exalted (<i>Is. 40:4</i>)
Chorus:	And the glory of the Lord (<i>Is. 40:5</i>)
Recitative (<i>Bass</i>):	Thus saith the Lord (<i>Hag. 2:6, 7 and Mal. 3:1</i>)
Aria (<i>Bass</i>):	But who may abide? (<i>Mal. 3:2</i>)
Chorus:	And He shall purify (<i>Mal. 3:3</i>)
Recitative (<i>Mezzo</i>):	Behold, a virgin shall conceive (<i>Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23</i>)
Aria (<i>Mezzo</i>) and Chorus:	O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion (<i>Is. 40:9</i>)
Recitative (<i>Bass</i>):	For behold, darkness shall cover the earth (<i>Is. 60:2,3</i>)
Aria (<i>Bass</i>):	The people that walked in darkness (<i>Is. 9:2</i>)
Chorus:	For unto us a child is born (<i>Is. 9:6</i>)
Orchestra:	Pifa
Recitative (<i>Soprano</i>):	There were shepherds abiding in the field (<i>Luke 2:8</i>) And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them (<i>Luke 2:9</i>) And the angel said unto them (<i>Luke 2:10, 11</i>) And suddenly there was with the angel (<i>Luke 2:13</i>)
Chorus:	Glory to God (<i>Luke 2:14</i>)
Aria (<i>Soprano</i>):	Rejoice greatly (<i>Zech. 9:9, 10</i>)
Recitative (<i>Mezzo</i>):	Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd (<i>Is. 35:5, 6</i>)
Aria (<i>Mezzo</i> and <i>Soprano</i>):	He shall feed his flock (<i>Is. 40:11; Matt. 11:28, 29</i>)
Chorus:	His yoke is easy, and His burden is light (<i>Matt. 11:30</i>)

Offering
Intermission

PART TWO: The Suffering, Dying and Living Redeemer

Chorus:	Behold the Lamb of God (<i>John 1:29</i>)
Aria (<i>Mezzo</i>):	He was despised (<i>Is. 53:3</i>)
Chorus:	Surely He hath borne our griefs (<i>Is. 53:4,5</i>) And with His stripes we are healed (<i>Is. 53:5</i>) All we, like sheep, have gone astray (<i>Is. 53:6</i>)
Recitative (<i>Tenor</i>):	All they that see Him (<i>Ps. 22:7</i>)
Chorus:	He trusted in God (<i>Ps. 22:8</i>)
Recitative (<i>Tenor</i>):	Thy rebuke hath broken His heart (<i>Ps. 69:20</i>)
Aria (<i>Tenor</i>):	Behold and see if there be any sorrow (<i>Lam. 1:12</i>)
Recitative (<i>Soprano</i>):	He was cut off out of the land of the living (<i>Is. 53:8</i>)
Aria (<i>Soprano</i>):	But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell (<i>Ps. 16:10</i>)
Chorus:	Lift up your heads (<i>Ps. 24:7-10</i>)
Aria (<i>Soprano</i>):	How beautiful are the feet (<i>Rom. 10:15</i>)
Aria (<i>Bass</i>):	Why do the nations so furiously rage together? (<i>Ps. 2:1, 2</i>)
Recitative (<i>Tenor</i>):	He that dwelleth in heaven (<i>Ps. 2:4</i>)
Aria (<i>Tenor</i>):	Thou shalt break them (<i>Ps. 2:9</i>)
Chorus:	*Hallelujah! (<i>Rev. 19:6; 11:15; 19:16</i>)

PART THREE: The Triumphant and Glorified Redeemer

Aria (<i>Soprano</i>):	I know that my Redeemer liveth (<i>Job 19:25, 26; I Cor. 15:20</i>)
Chorus:	Since by man came death (<i>I Cor. 15:21, 22</i>)
Recitative (<i>Bass</i>):	Behold, I tell you a mystery (<i>I Cor. 15:51, 52</i>)
Aria (<i>Bass</i> and <i>Trumpet</i>):	The trumpet shall sound (<i>I Cor. 15:52, 53</i>)
Chorus:	Worthy is the Lamb that was slain (<i>Rev. 5:12, 13</i>) Amen

Benediction

*Congregation is invited to sing along. Lyrics on page 16.