



ROCKFORD CHORAL UNION*

2024 Fall Newsletter

From Our President...

Greetings to the Rockford Choral Union Choristers,

Once again, it is hard to believe that nearly another year has rolled around as we focus our attention on this year's Thanksgiving weekend **Messiah** performances on November 30 and December 1. In case you haven't heard, last year we had several positive reviews from professional out-of-town musicians who heard our performances. One Uber driver who was providing his service to an East Coast professional musician passenger during the following week heard him say, "That was the best performance of **Messiah** I have heard outside of a professional choir." Based on the comments we received, I believe we succeeded in presenting the message of redemption and God's love in **Messiah**.

We welcome your participation singing with us under our maestro, Mike Beert. He, like Nat Bauer before him, has challenged us throughout his tenure as director, and I think we met that challenge in the past with the six rehearsals we had in the months of October and November. **EXCEPT** this year we have reduced the number of rehearsals to five, which means that all of us will be expected to attend the rehearsals with only two excused absences allowed. Please plan on attending all five rehearsals unless it's absolutely necessary to be absent. Why? Each rehearsal is necessary to increase our understanding of the music and to refine our technique and musicality (and our Director reserves the right to change his mind in his interpretation!).

Please join us this year as we begin rehearsals on October 27th. Starting rehearsal time is precisely at 2 PM*. Because we are only having five rehearsals, we will have one short break with rehearsal time extended to 4:15 PM. You can download the registration form from our website: www.rockfordchoralunion.com. Dues are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students eighteen and under. So please join us and invite someone whom you think might enjoy performing with us.

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 Conductor...

Greetings, Fellow Musicians,

Again, another year has flown by, and I am looking forward to seeing you and making wonderful music! My summer has been one of playing chamber music, orchestra performances, and accompanying choir cantatas. The last part has become more and more important for me: how do other conductors warm up? How do they conduct choirs with and without orchestra? How do they work on diction? How do they run rehearsals? How do they interact with the choir? These are all things that I am always trying to improve on!

Most importantly, I was able to recharge my batteries physically, musically, and spiritually. The four weeks I spend at Lutheran Summer Music are always wonderful. I get to not only take part in the above activities but also experience them within a nurturing spiritual environment and in the wonderful Chapel of the Resurrection on the campus of Valparaiso University in Indiana. Mornings and evenings are devoted to singing and prayer. Lutheran Summer Music not only helps me attempt to be centered but also helps me develop my voice!

Our performance last year was THE BEST performance I have had the pleasure to be involved in: from the soloists, to the orchestra, to you, the choir! Again, having been involved with this organization since 1985, I can easily say last year's performance was a highlight for me in my career! People that I trust musically in the audience gave the performance very high praise! I think we have hit a groove and it's great to be a part of it!

What do we do then this year? What comes to mind is that we continue to work on musicality: increased work on diction (what I am always learning in the score and from you), increased tempi paired with lighter singing, and, in particular, more coloring and shading to increase dramatic elements. These are just a few of my thoughts from the past year. I have enjoyed picking the thoughts of choir directors that I admire and respect. So, yes, we are going to be building on the strengths from last year to create an even more powerful and musical experience for us and for our audiences.

The main thing I want you to know is how impressed and blessed I am to work with all of you. You come prepared to rehearsals and our work together is always efficient and yet always musically fulfilling. I hope you plan on joining us again this year for our 78th annual presentation!

Sincerely, Mike Beert, Conductor

*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.



www.rockfordchoralunion.com
www.facebook.com/rockfordchoralunion

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 10, 2024. 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

In Memoriam...

The 2024 *MESSIAH* concerts will be dedicated to the following RCU singers:
Orin Keplinger, Phyllis Monty, Kathy Moore (board member), and Patricia C. Myrda.

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 www.rockfordchoralunion.com and our YouTube page.

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

Practice Schedule 2024*

**October 27.....	Rehearsal.....	2–4:15 pm	November 24	Rehearsal.....	2–4:15 pm
**November 3.....	Rehearsal.....	2–4:15 pm	November 29.....	Final Rehearsal.....	7 pm
November 10	Rehearsal.....	2–4:15 pm	November 30.....	1st Performance.....	3 pm
November 17	Rehearsal.....	2–4:15 pm	December 1.....	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