



ROCKFORD CHORAL UNION*

2023 Fall Newsletter

From Our President...

To our faithful members of the Rockford Choral Union - Greetings!

It still feels very much like summer with the hot weather we have been having, but soon it will be time for us to think about our mission as the Choral Union, the annual presentation of Handel's MESSIAH. We welcome you to be with us this year. Our first rehearsal will be on October 15th at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 920 Third Avenue at 2:00pm. (Use the back entrance.) Whether this will be your first year, or your twentieth year singing with the chorus, we strongly encourage you to be at EACH rehearsal to develop the skills and bonding needed to present a strong and meaningful presentation on Thanksgiving weekend.

It was interesting hearing the reaction from the chamber orchestra after last year's concerts. Many of its members have been with us many years and there was an overwhelming consensus that the presentations were the best in memory. After what our world has been experiencing since 2020, it was good to see things moving back to more normal living and with the presentation of MESSIAH – the message of hope is sorely needed. Also, last year was the second year that we livestreamed both concerts. Our technicians did a fantastic job in livestreaming our concerts, and a recording of last year's presentation was handed over to Northern Public Radio (WNIU) to be presented in its entirety a few days before Christmas. We encourage you to get the word out to your friends and relatives, wherever they may be residing, that this year's concerts will again be livestreamed on our FACEBOOK page – more information will be later in this newsletter.

It is also important to realize that our concerts are available because of the help of MANY people – Emmanuel Lutheran Church, the other musicians, sponsors, board members, ushers and other needed personnel – all of these roles are needed before the first chord can even be heard. We thank you, and we look forward to seeing you at the first rehearsal. Board members will be available at 1:30pm for the first three rehearsals to help with registration, if you have not already registered.

God's Blessings, Peace and Health be with you. Dale Johnson, Rockford Choral Union President

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, Everyone!

The year has flown by SO fast! Summer is a blur due to music festivals and travel. The good thing about being involved in music is that summers are wonderful times to recharge the batteries for the fall! Even though it has been almost a year since our last performance, my memory reminds me that our performance last year was one of the best I can remember being involved in. That goes back to when I started playing in the Choral Union orchestra back in 1985 - almost 40 years!

Your performance was memorable in many ways: fantastic diction, enthusiasm in delivering the message, faster tempos, great musicianship along with other superlatives! I was extremely happy with your work and with the entire package. I know this year's performances will be even stronger! I would like to add an additional chorus number, "He Trusted In God" for this year's performances, so I hope you can take a good look at that piece. We'll find a happy medium between speed and delivery so the message will be even stronger.

I have been going through a spiritual journey of sorts this year, trying to tackle the importance of the message Isaiah has given to us in the Old Testament. So much of his words speak so freshly to us in MESSIAH that it's hard not to think about his words and prophecy. I keep coming back to one message I heard this Spring at a Synod-wide meeting: Isaiah was telling the captive Israelites all the sins that had brought them to Babylon. Then he completely turns the message into one of hope with two words: "BUT NOW"....

These words speak to me so strongly, even after months of thought and reflection. Isaiah is telling us all the plans God has for us. He sends His Son to us. There is hope for us. There is forgiveness. We can be happy to deliver that message in the glorious music of Handel and the words spoken to us over the centuries. It is in these thoughts that I return to our project. **The Music and the Message.** We are blessed. I hope you will join us again this year and bring others who feel the same and are willing to perform this masterpiece. I look forward to working with each of you this Fall. We start October 15!

Sincerely, Mike Beert, Conductor



www.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 \$15 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 5, 2023. 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 2023 MESSIAH concerts will be dedicated to the following RCU singers:
Dwayne Dixon, Paul Grover, Katherine Hogan and Eileen Schumann.

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 \$15 for adults and \$10 for students (18 and under)

Practice Schedule 2023

**October 15	Rehearsal	2–4 pm	November 12	Rehearsal	2–4 pm
**October 22.....	Rehearsal	2–4 pm	November 19	Rehearsal	2–4 pm
**October 29	Rehearsal	2–4 pm	November 24	Final Rehearsal.....	7 pm
November 5.....	Rehearsal	2–4 pm	November 25.....	1st Performance	3 pm
			November 26.....	2nd Performance	3 pm

**New members singing MESSIAH for the first time are welcome to join the chorus.
Registration will start at 1:30 p.m. for the first three rehearsals.

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