

Notable News



Newsletter of
Mennonite
Children's Choir
of Lancaster

June 2020 / Issue No. 4

Coronavirus Curve

MCCL continued making music and building community despite the unexpected changes brought about by COVID-19. Virtual rehearsals, unique at-home practice tools, and a virtual choir video were among activities singers engaged in the past few weeks. The following are some reflections of singers.



"I miss having choir on Tuesdays. That was the best part of my week. I can't wait until it starts again!"

- Joanna Story,
Chamber Choir



"We're missing MCCL this spring. Please thank the directors for doing what they can to keep the kids connected."

- Ellyn Nolt, Parent of
Concert and
Chamber Choir
singers



"I enjoyed the activities that we did like the warm-ups. It sort of was like we were at choir practice. I really miss Ms. Wingard and the rest of the choir. It helped cheer me up and realize that even if I'm not at choir practice physically, I can still make music!"

- Sophia Wenger,
Concert Choir



"I enjoy learning *Juntos* because it is in a different language. It has great rhythm. I miss not being able to sing with the other choir members in person."

- Caleb Kreider,
Concert Choir

American Choral Directors Association Honor Choir Participants

In early March, six MCCL singers (Ava Bird, Mallorene Marshall, Kate Metzler, Alejandro Veras, Miranda Veras, and Mia Wenger) traveled to Rochester, New York with Ms. Wingard and Mrs. Blessing for the American Choral Directors Association Eastern division conference. The singers participated in elementary and junior high auditioned honor choirs with acclaimed choral directors Henry Leck and Lynnel Joy Jenkins. Highlights of the experience included meeting lots of new friends from all over the northeastern United States, working with several composers of their songs in person, and performing in a stellar final concert!



Above: Alejandro Veras, Concert Choir singer, with director Dr. Lynnel Joy Jenkins, Artistic Director of the Princeton Girlchoir and Assistant Professor of Music Education at Westminster Choir College. Also pictured is MCCL director Ms. Wingard.



Above: Miranda Veras, Ava Bird, Mia Wenger, Kate Metzler, and Mallorene Marshall with director Mr. Henry Leck, prolific composer/arranger as well as founder and retired Artistic Director of the Indianapolis Children's Choir

Prelude Music and Choristers

Singers presented an end-of-semester sharing time for parents in the fall. Both programs have increased in number, and Prelude Music opened a second class in spring semester. Prelude Music and Choristers are non-auditioned classes.



Choristers

Guest Artist Fall 2019: Sherrie Strange Pratt

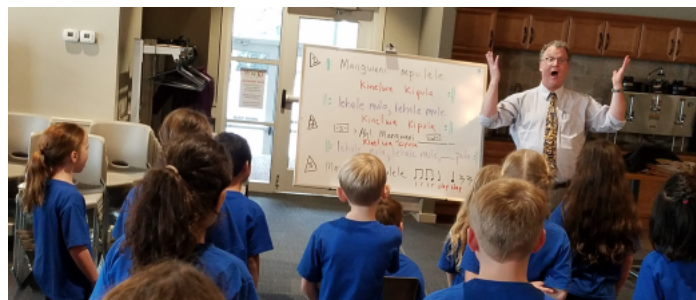
Featured guest artist New York soprano Sherrie Strange Pratt connected with audiences in ways that stimulated smiles, tears, nodding affirmations, and comments of appreciation. Singers had opportunity to interact with and learn from Pratt during several rehearsals prior to concerts. Performing with a professional vocalist helps refine skills and develop new ones. Pratt's expressive communication of lyrics breathed life into songs such as "Is He Worthy?" and "Mary, Mary."



Dr. Pratt, guest artist, singing with Chamber Choir in Christmas 2019

Do-Re-Mi Dollars Rehearsal Marathon

A highlight of the early spring semester is MCCL's annual Do-Re-Mi Dollars Rehearsal Marathon. Singers gather for a multi-hour afternoon of rehearsal, movement, and team-building with their directors and special guests! This year, Carol Choir learned a South African folk song with movement from Dr. Jeff Gemmill (Director of Choral Activities at Millersville University and MCCL board member), and also experienced traditional Israeli dance in a workshop with Linda Landis and Janice Kirk. Concert Choir and Chamber Choir tenors and basses grew in musicianship through a vocal masterclass with Dr. Jeff Gemmill, while Concert Choir and Chamber Choir sopranos and altos learned some basic Latin dance steps from Rebecca Gentry, a local dance instructor, to incorporate into the choreography of one of their spring semester pieces. Board member and MCCL parent, Jannat Veras, also coached each choir in Spanish language pronunciation for two spring songs.



Dr. Jeff Gemmill, director of Choral Activities at Millersville University and MCCL board member, leading during DRM\$ rehearsal marathon

Memories from the Year



Clockwise from top left:

Chamber Choir rehearses for Christmas concerts with Dr. Sherri Strange Pratt.

Men's Ensemble works on phrasing and breathing at the fall retreat. Physical movement enhances the music learning process.

Choristers engages in proper choral posture during interactive choral game.

Prelude Music learns to sing as one voice by moving a parachute in unison.

Chamber Choir invites guests to their annual fall car wash at Oregon Dairy.

Concert Choir attempts to follow multiple directions at one time during fall retreat activity led by director Mr. Shoff. This is an essential skill needed in choral singing.

Carol Choir builds friendships and learns names at the fall retreat. With 40 singers tasked with singing together, it's important to know each other because each voice matters.

Concert Choir competes in building the tallest tower with the weekly snack. Snack provides singers space to deepen relationships and relax together after working hard during rehearsals.

Memories from the Year



June 8 - 12

An Unexpected Song . . . Join us!

Celebrating the MCCL program and choral music:

Five days of games, prizes, hymn sing, videos, music, and giving opportunities



Although not able to provide concerts in person this spring due to COVID-19 restrictions, MCCL offered *An Unexpected Song*, a week of sharing music and celebrating the MCCL program. June 8 – 12 included songs, reflections, photos, games, recognition of graduating seniors, a virtual hymn sing, an improv piano concert by director Jonathan Shoff, a choral warm-up session with Millersville University music professor and MCCL Advisory Board member Dr. Jeffrey Gemmell along with MCCL staff, and an opportunity to give through MCCL's new online giving system. Themes of the week included forming faith through music, developing harmony by honoring every voice, and pursuing excellence in choral singing.

**There is still opportunity to give through the online donation portal:
www.mennonitechorenschoir.org/donate**

Help us reach our goal of \$12,500 to erase the deficit for this fiscal year!



Volunteers



MCCL is grateful for the parents, grandparents, friends, and alumni who volunteer! They serve by:

- providing snack
- chaperoning rehearsals, concerts, and tours
- mending, washing and distributing uniforms
- erasing pencil marks in music
- driving bus
- giving time and creativity to our two annual fundraisers
- and so much more!

Looking Ahead

The following plans are tentatively on the MCCL calendar, but the way in which and the time at which they unfold will be guided by recommendations issued from the national and international choral community.

Summer Tour 2021

Probable location: southern states

Men's Chorus Festival

Men's Ensemble will participate in a county-wide festival.

Music in the Parks

A choral festival held at various locations throughout the United States. Hershey Park is the nearest location for MCCL. The festival provides a year-end assessment for choirs by an outside panel of experienced master teachers and reinforces vocal skills practiced throughout the year.

Alumni sing-along in connection with Extra Give

Rekindle friendships around good food and songs, including a rehearsal for alumni to participate in a song in the 2020 Christmas concert series!

Guest artist

Fall 2020: An African-infused Christmas concert series with clinicians near and far, including choreography and percussion

First Ever Grandparent Open Rehearsal

Opportunity for grandparents of MCCL singers to peek behind the scenes.

Symphony No. 3 by Mahler

In collaboration with Franklin and Marshall College, First United Methodist Church, and a community choir and orchestra

Festival of Voices

An annual celebration of the vocal arts in Lancaster; an outreach of Music for Everyone

"Mass of the Children" by Rutter

A joint effort with Franconia-Lancaster Choral Singers and a live orchestra.



 **Mennonite Children's Choir**
OF LANCASTER

Audition for performing choirs.
June 23 & 24, July 21 & 22 from 4 - 7:30 p.m.
Auditions held online

Register for non-auditioned classes.

To schedule an audition or register, visit:
www.mennonitechildrenschoir.org/join/register
Still have questions? 717-455-7025

 Program of Lancaster Mennonite School

Board and Staff Highlight



Jewel Sensenig,
Board Chair

Jewel Sensenig's first memory of MCCL was nine years ago when her family attended a Christmas concert. The following spring both her children joined the program and sang with the choir the next three years. Her son then continued until graduating from high school. Sensenig reflects that music has always been part of her life. As a young child, she would go along to churches that her dad preached at and they would sing together as a family. Throughout highschool and post highschool, she sang in various choirs. It delights her to watch her own children sing and use their talents to bless others. While her children have out grown MCCL, she continues to serve as chair of the advisory board. MCCL has blessed the Sensenig family in many ways, and Jewel is happy to give back by serving on the board. Sensenig commented, "We are in the midst of uncertain times but we are not in the midst of an uncertain God. I know that God has MCCL in the palm of his hand and I look forward to the new things that he will be doing in and through MCCL in the years to come."



Audrey Livengood,
Communications and Marketing Director

Audrey Livengood's connection with MCCL began with the flute. In the choir's early years she accompanied the group. Soon after, in 2003 founding director Patricia Strong Myers invited her to serve as board member and later board secretary. During Livengood's tenure on the board, Ms. Myers transitioned from leadership to serve in Bulgaria and Rosemary Blessing transitioned from piano accompanist to assume leadership as director. After taking a year off to live in Honduras, Livengood resumed her role as board secretary in 2010. In 2011 Livengood ended her term on the board. That same year, an administrative assistant position was created and Livengood was offered the job. The flexible hours and work from home fit well with raising young children. In 2019 Livengood moved into the newly formed communications and marketing director position. Livengood and her husband Dwain own and operate Livengood Family Farm in Lancaster which offers a variety of vegetables and grass-fed meats sold locally and at a farmers' market in Philadelphia. The recent move onto the home place has demanded increased time and energy, so Livengood is ending her employment with MCCL, but plans to stay connected as her children participate in the choir.





Celebrating Graduates

MCCL graduates are normally recognized at the final concert of a spring season, which was not able to happen this year due to COVID-19. Graduates received copies of *Sing the Journey* and/or *Sing the Story* songbooks. Together, the graduates represent 49 1/2 years of musical growth through the MCCL program!



Leah Bowman

Years in choir: Seven
Church: Rossmere Mennonite
School: Lancaster Mennonite
Future plans: Major in social work and minor in music at Bluffton University

Meaningful song: "Is He Worthy?" by Andrew Peterson
I grew up listening to Peterson's music, and singing one of his songs my senior year was special. I love how the lyrics and harmonies in this song reflect the assurance that Jesus is present in the midst of our broken world.

MCCL memory: Our weekend tour to Rosedale Bible College Choral Fest is memorable. I got to know fellow choir members better through singing new music and playing games. The insight and direction of the guest conductor, Conrad Weber, was formative. Another memory I value is all the friendships I've made or strengthened through rehearsals, concerts, and on tour. Even though we come from different backgrounds and schools, we are able to come together and make beautiful music.



Kira Denlinger

Years in choir: Six
Church: Weaverland Anabaptist Fellowship
School: Lancaster Mennonite
Future plans: Major in secondary mathematics education at Millersville University

Meaningful song: "O Love" by Elaine Hagenberg
The text is powerful, and it reminds me that even in troubling times, God's love never changes.

MCCL memory: GO! Indonesia 2018 summer tour was outstanding. I loved the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and share music with people on the other side of the world.



Daniel Lantz

Years in choir: Seven and one-half
Church: Grace Bible Fellowship
School: Homeschool
Future plans: Major in mechanical engineering at LeTourneau University

Meaningful song: The Lord Is My Shepherd by Allen Pote
It pairs the comforting words of Psalm 23 with a gorgeous yet simple melody. It was a pleasure to sing this piece in Indonesia as well!

MCCL memory: Crying with laughter during Men's Ensemble rehearsals and playing Spikeball with the boys are fond memories.



Hannah Lapp

Years in choir: Two
Church: Bethel Christian Fellowship
School: Homeschool
Future plans: Work locally for a year and then pursue mission work internationally, perhaps at a refugee camp in Greece

Meaningful song: "Is He Worthy?" by Andrew Peterson
It reminds me who God is and what He has done for us.

MCCL memory: Summer tour to NYC holds many memories. Part of the group got separated, and while we waited for them, we held an impromptu concert on the sidewalk.



Elizabeth Nyveldt

Years in choir: Ten
Church: Bossler Mennonite
School: Elizabethtown Area
Future plans: Attend Rosedale Bible College for a semester and then major in Dental Hygiene at Harrisburg Area Community College

Meaningful song: "I Believe" by Mark Miller
The third verse is my favorite, I believe in God even when He is silent. Sometimes we can't hear God, but we still need to trust in him when we can't. I firmly believe that we can trust in Him when we can't hear him.

MCCL memory: GO! Indonesia 2018 summer tour was a highlight. We experienced many amazing things. Going to the beach at 4 a.m. to see the sun rise and waking at 2 a.m. to hike Mount Bromo were both incredible times. Meeting people who worship the same creator I worship and hearing their perspective was humbling. The Indonesians were kind and welcoming; I hope to return sometime.



Rebecca Sauder

Years in choir: Six
Church: Sunnyside Mennonite
School: Lancaster Mennonite
Future plans: Major in Music Therapy with a Vocal Concentration at Elizabethtown College and then work in the mission field

Meaningful song: "The Lord is My Shepherd" by Allen Pote
Since I was a child, Psalm 23 has been my favorite Bible passage, and this song spoke those words. In addition, the open harmonies make it a beautiful song to sing.

MCCL memory: MCCL has been a big part of my life and has gifted me with many memories. Summer tours hold favorite memories. In GO! Indonesia 2018 summer tour I experienced a new culture through hearing their music, staying in host homes, eating native food, and viewing some of Indonesia's countryside. We hiked Mount Bromo, a beautiful volcano, early in the morning and watched the sun rise over the crater. Another aspect that is always a blast with this choir is the bus rides. While they are often absolute chaos with people singing, playing games, and doing random group trivia, it is the prime time to get to know people better and develop new friendships. Being in MCCL has helped me realize my love for music and how much you can help others through music.



Rosie Westgate

Years in choir: Eleven
Church: St. Edwards Episcopal
School: Hempfield
Future plans: Major in Music Therapy at Duquesne University

Meaningful song: "I Believe" by Mark Miller
Even though this piece holds a simple melody, the meaningful text about God being ever present even when it doesn't feel like it, stuck with me and is an important reminder especially with what is going on in the world right now.

MCCL memory: One of my favorite memories was GO! Indonesia 2018 summer tour, where I met new friends and learned about a different culture. MCCL helped me grow as a musician and I am grateful for the many friends and memories I made with this choir.

Congratulations

Thank You

Thank you to individuals and these business sponsors who supported the choir's mission of training children and youth to glorify Jesus Christ through excellent choral singing in the 2019-2020 choir season.

Business Sponsors

Presto, *sprinting with us*

Friend of MCCL
Lancaster Mennonite School
Mark Martin Motors

Allegro, *running with us*

Pine Tree Motors

Allegretto, *skipping with us*

Bank of Bird-in-Hand
Eastern Mennonite Missions
Tim's Body Shop
University Music

Andante, *walking with us*

Everence
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Presto \$3,000+; Allegro \$1,500+; Allegretto \$1,000+; Andante \$500+



... training children
and youth to glorify
Jesus Christ
through excellent
choral singing.

Business Sponsorship Opportunities

For information on business sponsorship benefits, contact
mcclchoirmanager@lancastermennonite.org / 717-715-9905



Individual Supporters

MCCL is grateful for the network of support from many individual donors. Only a portion of the annual operating cost is covered by tuition. Your tax-deductible donation is greatly appreciated! Please make your check payable to LMS/MCCL and write MCCL on the memo line. Gifts of \$25 and greater are receipted.

MCCL
PO Box 10984
Lancaster, PA 17605

Gifts to MCCL will be recognized in concert programs annually. If you would like your gift to remain anonymous, please write 'MCCL-anonymous' on the memo line.

Managing Director and Artistic Director Reports



Maria Bowman, Managing Director

Music is an amazing gift from God that allows us to tell and hear stories in profound ways. Music moves our hearts, minds, and, at times, our physical bodies. Music provides hope in times of struggle, as well as encourages celebration in times of joy. Music nurtures faith and draws us together.

And, making music together with our voices creates unity. MCCL believes songs are one way transformation happens in our own hearts and then, one voice at a time, these songs have the power to transform our communities.

The MCCL spring concert theme, **"Singing on the Journey with faith, hope and strength"** was chosen well before the current situation in our world. Today we continue to be encouraged by the reminder that singing in the midst of all of life experiences calls us to look to God.

On the bottom of each music transcript Beethoven wrote "Soli De Gloria" (Glory to God). He also wrote "Jesu Java" (Jesus help) at the top of each music transcript. These two prayers are at the heart of the MCCL program, as well. Glorifying God with our voices through excellent choral training, rehearsals, concerts, and tours equips children and youth for life-long service to the church and community. In all of this, we rely on Jesus' help.

We hope that the voices of MCCL singers this week brought you joy and peace even though it was in an unexpected way. May you, too, raise your voice in song!

Maria Bowman,
Managing Director



Add your voice to MCCL's chorus of support!

We are almost halfway to our goal of \$12,500 to eliminate our current year's budget deficit.

Together we can meet this goal by either:

130 voices giving \$50

65 voices giving \$100

26 voices giving \$250

13 voices giving \$500

It's amazing what a choir of voices can accomplish!

www.mennonitechildrenschoir.org/donate



Your gift today will help MCCL keep singing!

MCCL singers receive over 80 hours of excellent choral training through rehearsals, concerts, masterclasses/retreats, and local tour days each year.

\$50	provides 4 hours of excellent choral training
\$100	provides 8 hours of excellent choral training
\$250	provides 20 hours of excellent choral training
\$500	provides a full semester of excellent choral training

Visit www.mennonitechildrenschoir.org/donate
to give the gift of singing!



Rosemary Blessing, Artistic Director

MCCL joined the rest of the world in experiencing the unexpected this spring. Despite entering unfamiliar territory, I was encouraged and inspired by the commitment and perseverance of singers to continue growing as individual musicians and choral singers, even when thrown into the unknown of virtual learning. This self-motivation, dedication to teamwork, and ongoing diligence evidenced in MCCL singers promises a strong base for the rising generation of world-changers. It is no wonder that studies indicate choral singers tend to be highly engaged in community service and involvement.

The DNA of choral music is community: singers breathe together, grow in shared musical interpretations of pieces together, and commit to individual preparation and musical refinement for the success of the team as a whole versus individual recognition. In preparing

for the MCCL Unexpected Song week, I have been reviewing concert footage from the past 15 years and am struck by the togetherness we missed this spring. The absence of singing together, of sharing concerts together, and of touring and strengthening relationships together has been a deep loss. However, it will also make the first sounds of in-person choral harmony even sweeter. The choral arts, with its fostering and modeling of teamwork and togetherness, are desperately needed today!

This is a difficult time for arts organizations. We know it will pass; however, not without struggle. Sadly, there are some arts organizations who will not survive. I invite us to work together, support one another, and cultivate a community that advocates for keeping the much-needed choral arts alive. I invite you to encourage a student who you know sings in MCCL, to give generously to MCCL as you are able, and to personally reflect on how music (and maybe even choral singing) influences and impacts your own emotional and spiritual journey. I end with the powerful closing phrase of one of our spring songs "Juntos" (Together) by Jim Papoulis: El poder de junto. Juntos somos fuertes. Unidad! *The power of together. Together we are strong. United!*

Rosemary Blessing

Rosemary Blessing,
Artistic Director

Wishing you a summer full of song!

From the MCCL Advisory Board and Staff



Jeremy Brubaker



Lyn Carlson



Dr. Jeffrey Gemmell



Diana Locke



Noah Martin



Lamar Myers



Lauren Pierce



Dean Sauder



Jewel Sensenig



Jannat Veras



Dr. Randy Westgate



Rosemary Blessing
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Maria Bowman
MANAGING DIRECTOR
and CHOIR MANAGER



Monica Hochstedler Carlson
DIRECTOR and
ASSISTANT CHOIR MANAGER



Donna Hershey
BOOKKEEPER



Sharon Ho
ACCOMPANIST



Audrey Livengood
COMMUNICATIONS AND
MARKETING DIRECTOR



Jonathan Shoff
DIRECTOR



Melody Stahl
DIRECTOR



Sarah Wingard
DIRECTOR



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www.mennonitechildrenschoir.org

*... training children and youth to glorify
Jesus Christ through excellent choral singing.*

Parents, if this is addressed to your child who has established a different address, please email the updated address to mccl@lancastermennonite.org. Thanks!



Upcoming Events

Christmas Concert Series 2020

Due to COVID-19 related uncertainties, December concert dates will be published this fall. Visit www.mennonitechildrenschoir.org or follow us on Facebook or Instagram for updates.

MCCL singers represent ...

65

congregations

45

schools
homeschool counted
as one entity

13

denominations



**Mennonite
Children's Choir
OF LANCASTER**



Register - classes

Audition - performing choirs

www.mennonitechildrenschoir.org/join/register