



Classes Handbook

Prelude Music and Choristers I & II

2023-2024

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MCCL Program

Mission Statement

Training children and youth to glorify Jesus Christ through excellent choral singing

Vision Statement

We honor and celebrate music as a gift from God by creating exceptional choral music, fostering community, and nurturing character.

We equip children and youth for a lifetime of worship and service to the church and community through Christ-centered repertoire that both affirms Anabaptist beliefs and reflects the musical diversity of the church around the world and through time.

Affiliation

The Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster is a program of Lancaster Mennonite School. This affiliation began in October 2001.

History

Founded in 1998, the Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster began as a choir of 31 singers under the direction of artistic director Patricia Strong Myers. Since then, the program has grown to include auditioned and non-auditioned choral opportunities for nearly 150 children and youth in kindergarten through grade 12. The singers represent a variety of churches, schools, and communities across Lancaster, Lebanon, and Chester counties. They gather on Tuesday evenings from August through May to participate in rigorous classes and rehearsals to prepare for sharing times and a Christmas and spring concert series.

In addition to the bi-annual concert series, the choirs collaborate with other arts organizations, participate in benefit concerts, perform in concert series, and share music with schools and other community organizations. Annual summer tours have provided opportunities for national (over 15 states) and international (Canada, Germany, Albania, Bulgaria, Indonesia, Czech Republic) travel and ministry. The choir has also had the privilege of singing at events such as Mennonite World Conference in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, local church conference events, Eastern Mennonite Mission events, Mennonite Disaster Service events, Mennonite Central Committee benefit concerts and local school chapel services. In addition, the choir has enjoyed connecting with the local community by singing at locations such as retirement communities, Lancaster Central Market, Park City Center, Lancaster Barnstormers, and Music for Everyone in Lancaster City.

Our Programs

Prelude Music (kindergarten through grade 1)

Prelude Music, a non-auditioned group, engages children with music. Singing, playing, moving, and listening are important components. Greater emphasis is given to experiencing than to performing.

Choristers I (grades 2 – 5) and Choristers II (grades 6 – 8)

Choristers, a non-auditioned group, provides an opportunity to learn vocal and choral skills in a relaxed, fun atmosphere. Participants learn healthy singing technique, intonation, beat keeping, ear training, rhythm reading, music reading, and rehearsal skills in a highly active and engaging environment.

Carol Choir (grades 2 – 5)

Carol Choir is an auditioned performing choir. See the MCCL website for additional information on the auditioned choirs.

Concert Choir (grades 6 – 8)

Concert Choir is an auditioned performing choir that strengthens skills learned in the Carol Choir. See the MCCL website for additional information on the auditioned choirs.

Chamber Choir (grades 9 – 12)

Chamber Choir is an auditioned advanced performing choir that builds on fundamentals learned in Carol and Concert Choirs. See the MCCL website for additional information on the auditioned choirs.

Men’s Ensemble (grades 9 - 12)

Men’s Ensemble is for male singers who are members of the Chamber Choir. See the MCCL website for additional information on the auditioned choirs.

Artistic Bios



Monica Hochstedler Carlson, Director, Prelude Music

Monica holds a Master of Music in Piano Pedagogy and Performance from Westminster Choir College and a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education from Goshen College. She teaches third through sixth grade general elementary music at Lancaster Mennonite School. In addition, Monica taught general music in public and private schools in VA, built a thriving private piano studio in VA and served as a private and group piano instructor at Goshen College (IN), Southern Methodist University (TX), Shenandoah Valley Preparatory Music (VA), and Woodberry Forest School (VA).



Sarah Smith, Director, Choristers and Assistant, Carol & Concert choirs

Sarah holds a bachelor’s degree in Music Education (voice concentration) from Grove City College. During college, she was a member of the Grove City College Touring Choir for all four years and served as the student conductor for the group as well as received the Music Education award her senior year. Sarah teaches lower elementary music and is the sixth grade classroom assistant at Veritas Academy.

Leadership Staff and Advisory Board Contacts

Artistic

Rosemary Blessing

Artistic Director
Director, Chamber Choir
chamberchoir@lancastermennonite.org

Administrative

Maria Bowman

Managing Director
Choir Manager
mcclchoirmanager@lancastermennonite.org

Advisory Board

Lyn Carlson, Board Chair
mcclboard@lancastermennonite.org
Larry Guengerich, Vice Chair
mcclboardvc@lancastermennonite.org
Diana Locke, Secretary
Douglas Garrett, Treasurer

Kate Greiser
Seth Hake
Nelson Kling
Durelle Leaman
Lamar Myers
Carissa Sherer

Class Details and Logistics

Locations and Times

Blossom Hill Mennonite Church graciously allows MCCL to rent their facilities. Singers and families are expected to treat facilities with care and are not permitted to be in areas of the church that are not in use by MCCL.

Classes are held on Tuesdays at the following locations and times:

Prelude Music class	Blossom Hill Mennonite Church	5:00 – 5:45 p.m. class #1 6:00 – 6:45 p.m. class #2
Choristers I class	Blossom Hill Mennonite Church	6:00 – 6:45 p.m.
Choristers II class	Blossom Hill Mennonite Church	6:55 – 7:40 p.m.

Singer/Family Expectations

- Arrive 5-10 minutes before rehearsal begins.
 - This is time to use the restroom.
 - Parents/guardians will sign in their singer(s).
- Parents are invited to wait in lobby or hallway during class.
 - There is access to nursery for younger siblings. Please clean up following use.
 - Siblings must be under the supervision of parent/guardian at all times.
- Parents/guardians must sign their children out.

Illness

- Please do not come to MCCL event if you have any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever over 100.4 in previous 24 hours
 - Stomach illness in previous 24 hours
 - Positive Covid test in previous 5 days
 - New or significant cold symptoms: cough, runny nose, or sore throat (not allergies)
- If you need to miss an MCCL event due to illness, please email director immediately via email.

Class Calendar

2023 Fall Semester

Dates of classes and details for specific dates are listed below.

Day	Date	Time	Details
Tues.	Oct. 3	5:00 – 5:45 p.m.	Prelude Music 5:00 p.m. Class begins (Parent meeting in classroom at 5:10 p.m.)
		6:00 – 6:45 p.m.	Prelude Music 6:00 p.m. Class begins (Parent meeting in sanctuary at 6:10 p.m.)
		6:00 – 6:45 p.m.	Choristers I 6:00 p.m. Class begins (Parent meeting in sanctuary at 6:00 p.m.)
		6:55 – 7:40 p.m.	Choristers II 6:55 p.m. Class begins (Parent meeting in classroom #34 at 7:15 p.m.)
Tues.	Oct. 10		
Tues.	Oct. 17		
Tues.	Oct. 24		
Tues.	Oct. 31		
Tues.	Nov. 7		Receive Jars for Fall Fundraiser at class More details will be shared at the parent meeting.
Tues.	Nov. 14		
Tues.	Nov. 21	6:00 – 6:45 p.m. Class	Prelude Music both classes meet at same time (5 p.m. class: note time change to prepare for sharing time) Fall Jar Fundraiser money due.
		6:00 – 6:45 p.m. Class	Choristers I & Choristers II both classes meet at the same time (6:55 p.m. class: note time change prepare for sharing time) Fall Jar Fundraiser money due.
		6:45 - 7:15 p.m. Sharing Time	Prelude Music, Choristers I & II Family members are encouraged to attend!

2023 Spring Semester

Dates of classes and details for specific dates are listed below.

Day	Date	Time	Details
Tues.	Feb. 27	5:00 – 5:45 p.m.	Prelude Music 5:00 p.m. Class begins (Parent meeting in classroom at 5:10 p.m.)
		6:00 – 6:45 p.m.	Prelude Music 6:00 p.m. Class begins (Parent meeting in sanctuary at 6:10 p.m.)
		6:00 – 6:45 p.m.	Choristers I 6:00 p.m. Class begins (Parent meeting in sanctuary at 6:00 p.m.)
		6:55 – 7:40 p.m.	Choristers II 6:55 p.m. Class begins (Parent meeting in classroom #34 at 7:15 p.m.)
Tues.	Mar. 5		
Tues.	Mar. 12		
Tues.	Mar. 19		

2022 Spring Semeseter (cont.)

Day	Date	Time	Details
Tues.	Mar. 26		
Tues.	April 2		
Tues.	April 19		
Tues.	April 16	6:00 – 6:45 p.m. Class	Prelude Music both classes meet at same time (5 p.m. class: note time change to prepare for sharing time)
		6:00 – 6:45 p.m. Class	Choristers I & Choristers II both classes meet at the same time (6:55 p.m. class: note time change prepare for sharing time)
		6:45 - 7:15 p.m. Sharing Time	Prelude Music, Choristers I & II Family members are encouraged to attend!
Sun.	April 21	3:00 p.m. report time 4:00 p.m. concert	LOCATION TBD Prelude Music and Choristers I & II will join auditioned choirs. More details will be shared at parent meeting and throughout semester.
Tues.	April 23	6:15 to 7:20 p.m. Grade 1 to Grade 5 7:00 – 8:15 p.m. Grade 6 to grade 8	Join the Song – Open Rehearsal at Neffsville Mennonite Church Singers in rising grades 2 through 8 are invited to participate in a performing choir rehearsal (optional)

General Information

Communication

The MCCL directors and staff communicate by email. Parents and singers are encouraged to email their directors rather than contacting them at classes.

If a singer is going to be absent, please email the director ahead of time.

Dress Guidelines

MCCL's goal is maintain a professional appearance at each class and concert.

- Shorts must extend below fingertip length when arms are at the side.
- Dresses or skirts must come to at least two inches above the top of the knee.
- Pictures, messages, and symbols on clothing and jewelry must be in line with the mission and values of the choir.
- Shirts must have sleeves and cover the midriff.
- Undergarments may not be visible.
- Leggings are permitted with a top that is mid-thigh in length.

Singer Discipline

MCCL is committed to restorative practices and discipline, which means talking openly about and creating a plan to change behaviors that negatively impact a singer and/or the whole choir. Since we believe singers must accept responsibility for their behavior, restorative practices may include apologies, mediation, and actions to right a wrong. MCCL staff will work with all students using restorative practices with the intent of each student owning what was wrong and making things right. Parents may be asked to participate in this process.

Student Safety

Student Safety Policy

As a faith-based community choir, we believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of choir members is vital. The Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster (MCCL) has a policy in place to ensure the safety of students participating in the MCCL program. It can be viewed in the Member Portal section of the MCCL website. Ask MCCL staff for a hard copy if desired.

Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, teasing, name calling, embarrassing someone in public, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. Students or parents should inform staff immediately when any form of bullying is observed.

Inclement Weather Policy

- All weather-related cancellations will be announced by email.
- Cancellations of concerts will be announced on WDAC and WJTL and posted on the MCCL Facebook page and website.

Financial Responsibilities

Tuition

The Mennonite Children’s Choir of Lancaster is a tuition-based choir. Tuition funds about one-third of our budget. Offerings, fundraisers, and donations make up the balance of our income. Operating expenses include sheet music, uniforms, concerts, salaries, facility rental, insurance, and publicity.

Tuition for the Prelude Music, Choristers I, and Choristers II program is:

\$190 full year
\$95 per semester *

* In addition, families participate in a fall semester fundraiser.

Tuition Assistance

MCCL invites singers to participate in choir regardless of financial status and will work with each family to ensure the financial obligations to MCCL are met. Tuition assistance is available to those who sing the entire year. It is also available to families new to the MCCL program in January. The tuition assistance application, along with non-refundable deposit, is due with choir registration. Applications received by the early deadline will be given priority.

Fundraisers

Fundraisers help offset the difference between tuition and the actual cost of the MCCL program. Singers and families of Prelude Music and Choristers I & II are expected to participate in the Fall Jar Fundraiser or pay an opt-out fee, if preferred. Details about the fundraiser will be shared at the fall parent meeting.

Each family will receive 6 food mixes to sell. Mixes are \$9.50 each.
Opt-out fee is \$57.

If a family bypasses fundraiser participation through a required opt-out fee, the payment is not a tax-deductible donation.

Refer a New Family

For the 2023-2024 choir season, current MCCL families will receive a tuition discount for each new choir family who joins a choir or class as a result of their personal invitation. The newly invited family will also receive a discount.

	New MCCL family with singer in Prelude Music or Choristers I or II	New MCCL family with singer in Carol Choir	New MCCL family with singer in Concert Choir or Chamber Choir
Discount for each current and new family	\$10/semester \$25/full year	\$50/full year	\$60/full year

The discount is per family, not per singer.

- If a new MCCL family registers singers in multiple classes or choirs, the highest discount

available will be applied.

- If two current MCCL families invited the same new family, the discount is shared between the current families.
- As part of registration, current MCCL families will list new families they invited to join MCCL this spring.

Business Sponsorship and Tuition Discounts

Each year, business sponsors are invited to partner with MCCL. Partnering with local business owners strengthens the MCCL program and provides a portion of the MCCL budget. There are five levels of sponsorship:

Concert Series Underwriter	\$5,000 per concert season
Presto	\$3,000
Allegretto	\$1,500
Allegro	\$1,000
Andante	\$ 500

Benefits vary depending on the level of sponsorship and include options for advertising in the concert program, on concert posters, and at concerts.

Family and friends of singers often are significant supporters of MCCL. Please send names of potential business sponsors to Managing Director. If a business you recommend has not already been contacted, we will prepare a sponsorship packet for you to share with them.

A tuition discount for the forthcoming year will be applied to your family for each business sponsor you recommend and contact if they partner with MCCL by the start of the fall semester. Total tuition discount may not exceed total tuition owed by each family.

\$500 per family for a Concert Series Underwriter
\$300 per family for a Presto business partner
\$150 per family for an Allegretto business partner
\$100 per family for an Allegro business partner
\$ 50 per family for an Andante business partner

Refund Policy

Tuition paid, less a \$30 administrative fee, may be refunded through the second class of the semester. Tuition will not be refunded after the second class of the semester.

Returned Check Fee

A \$45 fee will be charged for returned checks.

Instructions for Registration

1. Print this page.
2. Go to <http://www.mennonitechilrenschoir.org>
3. Click green **Member Portal** button at the bottom of any page.
4. Enter Username and Password.
Username: mcclmember
Password: MCCLsing!2324!
5. Click **Singer Registration**.
6. When logged in, complete **Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5**.

Email mcclchoirmanager@lancastermennonite.org if you experience any difficulties or have questions during the registration process.