



MCCL Handbook

Carol, Concert, Chamber Choirs

2023-2024

www.mennonitechildrenschoir.org

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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.

Programs

Prelude Music (kindergarten through grade 1)

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

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

A non-auditioned class, Choristers 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. Singers:

- sing in unison and in simple two-part harmony
- practice singing basics: proper breathing, posture, tone, diction, healthy vocal production, basic music reading skills, and musicianship

- develop choral disciplines such as following instructions, watching the director, and choir etiquette
- learn age-appropriate music including rounds, simple melodies, hymns, and songs from around the world and across time
- sing in concerts of excellence for the glory of God
- develop understanding of worship to God and service to the church

Concert Choir (grades 6 – 8)

Concert Choir is an auditioned performing choir. Singers:

- strengthen skills learned in Carol Choir
- develop a clear choral sound with consistency throughout the vocal range
- continue musicianship and choral disciplines: sight singing, phrasing, score study, dynamics, and performance practice
- sing in two-, three-, and four-part harmony
- learn music of different choral styles, historical periods, languages, and cultures
- participate in a multi-day national tour

Chamber Choir (grades 9-12)

Chamber Choir is an auditioned performing choir. Singers:

- build on fundamentals learned in Carol and Concert Choirs
- sing SATB as well as three- and four-part men's and women's ensemble pieces
- continue to develop musicianship and music literacy: vocal independence, score analysis, dissonant intervals, and masterclass opportunities
- participate in a multi-day national or international tour

Men's Ensemble (grades 9 - 12)

Men's Ensemble is for male singers who are members of the Chamber Choir. The ensemble nurtures and promotes singing for the changing and changed male voice and performs diverse repertoire ranging from unison to four-part harmony.

Staff and Advisory Board Contacts

Artistic

Rosemary Blessing

Artistic Director
Director, Chamber Choir
chamberchoir@lancastermennonite.org

Sarah Wingard

Director, Carol and Concert Choirs
carolandconcertchoir@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

Artistic Staff Bios



Rosemary Siegrist Blessing, Artistic Director, Chamber Choir

Rosemary holds degrees in piano performance and business administration from Eastern Mennonite University and has pursued graduate study in choral music. She has taught piano through Eastern Mennonite University's Preparatory Program, taught piano and theory at the former Pennsylvania Academy of Music, maintains a thriving private piano studio, and teaches piano at Franklin and Marshall College. Rosemary is an active pianist in the Lancaster area, having accompanied various choral groups, musical theater groups, and currently plays with the Allegro Orchestra Lancaster.



Sarah Wingard, Director, Carol and Concert Choirs

Sarah earned her bachelor's degree in music education from Messiah College with a concentration in voice and extensive study in piano. Growing up in Virginia, Sarah gained early musical experience singing with the nationally acclaimed Shenandoah Valley Children's Choir. Sarah teaches elementary general music at Lancaster Mennonite School and has more than ten years of experience teaching middle school classroom music and choir. In addition to helping with local music camps and events, she has taught private voice and piano lessons. Sarah local choral experience includes singing with the Susquehanna Chorale and Wheatland Chorale.



Galen Kauffman, Director, Men's Ensemble and Instructor, Concert Choir

Galen holds a bachelor's degree in Music (vocal concentration) from Malone University. For the past four years, he directed the middle and high school choirs at Grace International School in Thailand. Before that, he served as a school principal at a private school in Ohio, where he also directed musical performances. He sings locally with the Wheatland Chorale. Galen and his wife Jeanette enjoy raising their four children.



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.



Carrie Warner, Accompanist, Carol and Concert Choirs

Carrie holds a bachelor's degree in Music Education (piano concentration) from West Chester University. She has taught general music and directed middle school and high school choirs at West-Mont Christian Academy, Berks Christian School, and Conestoga Christian School. For the past several years, she served as accompanist for school musicals at Berks Christian School and has accompanied productions for other organizations throughout her music career.



Elisa Chodan, Assistant, Music Program and Voice Lesson Instructor

Elisa is a full-time graduate student at Drexel University studying Music Therapy. She teaches private voice lessons at the Philadelphia Piano Institute. Previously she served as music educator, teaching choir and general music at Veritas Academy and as the Choristers director for MCCL. She led the women's chorus at Lancaster Bible College. She holds a bachelor's degree in Music Education and a Master's degree in Voice Performance from Bob Jones University with additional graduate credits from Westminster Choir College. She was a 2019-20 VOCES8 US Scholar and two-times summer intern with VOCES8 in Europe.



Laura Metzler, Assistant, Choristers

Laura holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education, with a concentration in Spanish and significant coursework in music, from Houghton College. She taught private piano, guitar, and violin lessons over the last 15 years and leads worship in her home congregation.

Administrative Staff Bios



**Maria Bowman
Managing Director and Choir Manager**

Maria holds a B.A. with concentrations in psychology, education, and English from Eastern Mennonite University. She is pursuing graduate work in non-profit management and leadership through Eastern Mennonite University. Previously she worked in Human Resources at Eastern Mennonite Missions, served as a Family Life Educator at COBYS Family Services, and taught Special Education in middle school.



**Kendra Guengerich
Bookkeeper**

Kendra serves at the Office Administrator at Blossom Hill Mennonite Church in addition to her role with MCCL. She previously worked for the Hempfield School District and for Williams Apothecary and served at the treasurer for a school PTO.



**Audrey Livengood
Volunteer Editor**

Audrey holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Millersville University and a master's degree in education from Eastern Mennonite University. She taught at Lititz Area Mennonite School, served on the MCCL Advisory board, served on MCCL staff, and now homeschools her four children who are current MCCL singers. She has a small piano studio. In addition, she and her husband, along with their children, own and operate Livengood Family Farm, a regenerative farm in Lancaster, PA.



**Lu Dee
Volunteer Assistant Music Librarian**

Bio coming

Auditions and Registration

Auditions are generally conducted between May and July for the following fall. Auditions will be closed when a choir is at capacity.

Prelude Music

Auditions are not required for the Prelude Music program. See the MCCL Classes Handbook for registration information.

Choristers I and II

Auditions are not required for the Choristers I and II programs. See the MCCL Classes Handbook for registration information.

Carol and Concert Choirs

Auditions are typically 20 minutes and include:

- matching pitch
- singing in tune
- using head voice
- maintaining a melodic line while another line is being sung
- singing one prepared piece of music of singer's choice (*sung a cappella*)

Chamber Choir

Auditions are typically 20 minutes and include:

- vocalizing for range and tone quality
- engaging in exercises for pitch, aural, and sight-reading skills
- singing one prepared piece of music of singer's choice (*a cappella* or with accompaniment)

Re-Auditions

Singers who have successfully auditioned for MCCL do not need to audition again, even when moving from one choir to the next. However, a vocal check in may be requested when singers move between auditioned choirs such as Carol Choir to Concert Choir and Concert Choir to Chamber Choir.

Singers who do not sing consecutive semesters may need to re-audition.

General Information

Responsibilities

Family

- Pray for the choir, directors, performances, and audiences.
- Arrive on time to all MCCL events.
- Review this Choir Handbook as a family.
- Mark all MCCL events from the Choir Calendar (pages 19 - 22) in this handbook on your family calendar and commit to attending all events. (See attendance policy about excused absences.)

Singer

- Display a positive attitude, demonstrate Christ-like behavior and language, create an atmosphere of community and respect for peers, staff, parent volunteers, and hosts at all MCCL events.
- Complete weekly practice assignments on time (typically by Monday evening at 9 p.m.).
- Accept responsibility for and take care of your music binder.
 - Small tote to hold music binder, water bottle, and MCCL lanyard.
 - Bring your music binder to each rehearsal and take it home every week.
 - Mark your music with a pencil and erase pencil marks at the end of each semester before turning in your music binder.
 - Keep your music binder in a safe place and treat it with care.

Parent

- Volunteer at least one time each semester, in addition to snack sign up, in areas that suit your abilities and interests.
 - The Choir Manager will create a parent volunteer schedule each semester.
 - Certain volunteer roles require background checks. Instructions for background checks can be found in the MCCL Student Safety Policy on MCCL website.
 - Some parent volunteer roles require additional time (weekly rehearsal chaperones, uniform coordinator, jar fundraiser team, music librarian, editor, etc). These volunteer positions require training and come with a small tuition discount based on time.
- Provide rehearsal or concert snack once each semester.
- Provide finger food item for one concert reception each semester, if requested.

Attendance Policy

Prompt, consistent attendance demonstrates commitment, develops unity in choral sound, and respects time of all singers and staff. When a singer misses rehearsals, retreats, or performances, their absence has a noticeable impact on the advancement and the professionalism of the choir. For this reason, all singers and families are expected to understand, embrace, and uphold MCCL's attendance policy.

- Singers are expected to attend and be on time for all MCCL events.
- Communication is key to successful attendance. MCCL values the holistic growth that happens when singers are involved in other activities. Our aim is to be reasonable and realistic for the singer and MCCL.
 - Singers must communicate and seek approval for all known or potential conflicts with any required MCCL event (rehearsals, retreats, concerts) by completing an "Excused Absence & Late Arrival Request Form". (Note: The "Excused Absence & Late Arrival" form has a space for potential conflicts where specific dates are not known.)
 - Singers are granted one excused absence per semester.

- Directors are willing to work with a singer regarding the possibility of alternative plans if more than one absence is needed *if* communicated through the excused absence form at the beginning of the semester or as soon the conflict is known.
 - Examples of excused absences are: school concerts, performances, competitions, community and school sport events, funerals, and family trips.
- Singers are expected to complete weekly practice assignments even when they miss a rehearsal or retreat.
- In the case of illness, please notify the director by email as soon as possible.
 - Singers are expected to complete the weekly practice assignment.
 - For minor illnesses like a cold or sore throat that do not prevent a singer from attending school, MCCL asks that singers attend rehearsal but sit in the back of the room as an observer.
- If a singer is absent or tardy (even if excused) or is struggling to complete practice assignments on time, extra make-up work may be assigned by the director depending on what was covered during the rehearsal, retreat, or practice assignments.
 - MCCL staff are committed to working with each singer to ensure learning and growth.
 - Extra make-up work ensures singer's progress matches the rest of the choir.
 - The plan will consider the singer's history of rehearsal preparation and musical experience and may include rehearsing privately with a director for a fee of \$30/half hour. Extenuating circumstances will be considered.
- Singers with multiple last minute requests for absence, unexcused absences or late arrivals may be placed on probationary status which may include a re-audition process.

Weekly Practice Assignments

Weekly practice assignments build upon choral skills learned in rehearsals, prepare singers for the following week's rehearsal, and deepen holistic musical growth. Revisiting music throughout the week creates deeper roots for singers at every experience level. Some organizations achieve this through multiple weekly practices or required private instruction. MCCL utilizes consistent weekly at home practice to strengthen individual singer musicianship, to teach self-evaluation, and to develop responsibility. Weekly assignments involve a variety of strategies to help singers with different learning styles engage with the music learning and generally average:

- About 20 to 30 minutes weekly for Carol Choir
- About 45 to 60 minutes weekly for Concert Choir
- About 60 to 90 minutes weekly for Chamber Choir

Communication

- Please read your email carefully.
- Directors will email weekly updates regarding practice assignments, schedule, fundraisers, concert details, and more.
- Please email directors rather than contacting them at rehearsals or concerts.

Rehearsal Dress Guidelines

MCCL's goal is to maintain a professional appearance at each rehearsal, retreat, and event.

- 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 mid-riff.
- 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.

Recommitment Process

If a singer does not meet MCCL expectations (behavior, attendance, practice assignments) and does not follow through with a collaborative plan to remedy the situation, a singer will be asked to go through a recommitment process including a timeline. During the recommitment process, a singer may sit out at concerts or other MCCL events. If the recommitment process is related to uncompleted weekly practice assignment or attendance, the singer will be asked to rehearse privately with a director for a fee of \$30 per one-half hour. A recommitment process has the potential to lead to dismissal from the choir without a refund.

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.

Rehearsal Guidelines

Locations and Times

Blossom Hill Mennonite Church and Neffsville Mennonite Church graciously allow 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 churches that are not in use by MCCL.

Rehearsals and classes are held on Tuesdays at the following locations and times:

Prelude Music classes	Blossom Hill Mennonite Church	5:00 – 5:45 p.m. 6:00 – 6:45 p.m.
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.
Carol Choir rehearsal	Neffsville Mennonite Church	6:15 – 7:20 p.m.
Concert Choir rehearsal	Neffsville Mennonite Church	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Chamber Choir rehearsal	Blossom Hill Mennonite Church	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Men’s Ensemble rehearsal	Blossom Hill Mennonite Church	6:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Rehearsal Supplies for Singers

- A tote bag to carry pencil, water bottle, name lanyard, and music binder
 - MCCL provides pencil and music binder
- A full water bottle labeled with singer’s name

Singer Expectations

- Arrive 5-10 minutes before rehearsal begins.
 - This is time to use the restroom and fill water bottles.
 - Each singer will sign in with arrival time.
- Carol and Concert Choir singers who arrive more than 15 minutes early and are without a parent will sit quietly and individually in the back of the sanctuary until five minutes before rehearsal begins.
- MCCL is a mostly technology-free space. We place great emphasis on cultivating teamwork and building relationships.
 - To this end, cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used during rehearsal, retreats, concerts, or during snack.
 - Electronic devices used during rehearsal, retreats, or concerts will be held by a staff member or parent volunteer until the end of rehearsal.
 - Electronic devices may be used *individually* in a designated area before and after rehearsal for choir or school homework, calling a parent, etc. However, all technology must be put away 15 minutes before the start of rehearsal. If a group of singers is gathered around a phone, a staff member or parent volunteer will hold the device for the remainder of the rehearsal.
 - Please keep cell phones away during snack.
- Stay in areas of churches that are used by MCCL.

Parent / Guardian Expectations

- Parents are welcome to attend rehearsals and are asked not to talk in the rehearsal space.
- All singers and siblings must be directly supervised by an adult if not in rehearsal.
- Arrive promptly for pick up.
 - Parents/guardians of Carol and Concert Choir singers must sign their children out at

Neffsville Mennonite Church.

- If a parent is late for pick up, singers will sit on their own in the fellowship hall or back of sanctuary until parent/guardian arrives to pick them up.
- The registration form will give opportunity for parents to indicate other adults who are permitted to pick up and sign out their children.
- Younger siblings must be always under the direct supervision of an adult.

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 case (following CDC guidelines)
 - Significant cold symptoms: cough, runny nose, or sore throat (not allergies)
 - For minor illnesses like a cold or sore throat that do not prevent a singer from attending school, MCCL asks that singers attend rehearsal but sit in the back of the room as an observer.
- If you need to miss an MCCL event due to illness, please email director immediately.

Snack

- Parents provide, serve, and clean up snack each week following rehearsal.
- Sign-up for snack is available during registration.
- Simple and healthy snacks are encouraged.
- Please do not serve snacks that create many crumbs, such as chips or popcorn.
- Singers will have water bottles, so no drink is needed.
- Wipe all tables that were used, clean up trash, and vacuum/sweep crumbs on floor.

Concerts

Concert Details

- Singers are expected to arrive in uniform and be ready to sing on stage at communicated report time, generally 1½ hours before concert time.
- Singers should leave cell phones and electronic devices at home, in vehicles, or with parents. Use of technology during pre-concert warm-ups and/or during the concert will result in devices being given to staff member/volunteer, kept in a safe location, and returned at the end of the concert.

Concert Etiquette for Parents

MCCL concerts are well attended by members of the local community, congregations, and choir families. Please be courteous toward everyone who attends a concert.

- Be considerate of concert guests by parking in spaces farthest from the church entrance.
- Parents and other concert guests should not enter the sanctuary during rehearsal before a concert. The doors will open for concert seating 30 minutes before concert time.
- Consider sitting toward the back of the venue if you attended a previous concert.
- Please do not save seats before the concert.

Pre-Concert Snack

- Parents provide, serve, and clean up snack before each concert.
- Sign-up for snack is available during registration.
- Wipe all tables that were used and clean up trash and crumbs on the floor.

Formal Concert Attire

Carol and Concert Choir Girls

- MCCL provides blouses and black skirts (both choirs) and rosette (Carol only).
- Singers provide black dress shoes (no flip flops, clogs, or boots).
- Carol Choir girls wear white tights.
- Concert Choir girls wear either flesh-toned nylons or no nylons.
- All girls should wear white or light colored undergarments under their blouses.
- Jewelry and watches should be limited to stud earrings. Medical bracelets are an exception.
- Hair should be away from eyes so singers can see director.
- Hair accessories should be small and simple.

Carol and Concert Choir Boys

- MCCL provides white dress shirts and ties or bow ties for each season.
- Singers provide black dress pants, black socks, black dress shoes (no sneakers), black belt, and white undershirt.
- Jewelry and watches should be limited to stud earrings. Medical bracelets are an exception.
- Hair should be away from eyes so singers can see director.

Chamber Choir Ladies

- MCCL will order a black dress for each lady during her first year in Chamber Choir.
- Singers purchase a dress through MCCL (approximately \$80).
- Singers provide black dress shoes (no flip flops, clogs, or boots).
- Jewelry and watches should be limited to stud earrings and pearl necklaces. Medical bracelets are an exception.
- Hair should be away from eyes so singers can see director.
- Hair accessories should be small and simple.

Chamber Choir Men

- Hair should be away from eyes so singers can see director.
- Jewelry and watches should be limited to stud earrings. Medical bracelets are an exception.

Fall

- MCCL provides ties which singers return at the end of fall semester.
- Singers purchase gray dress shirt through MCCL (approximately \$30).
- Singers provide white undershirt, black dress pants, black socks, black belt, and black dress shoes.

Spring

- Singers purchase blue dress shirt and plaid bow tie through MCCL (approximately \$50).
- Singers provide white undershirt, black dress pants, black socks, black belt, and black dress shoes.

Casual Concert Attire

Carol, Concert and Chamber Choir

Casual concert attire will be required for local tour day, informal events, and some social activities.

- MCCL t-shirt
 - New singers will receive MCCL t-shirt in September (cost included in registration fee).
 - Additional or replacement t-shirt cost is \$12/shirt.
- Khaki or tan bottoms
 - Guys wear long pants.
 - Ladies may wear long pants, knee-length (or longer) skirts, or capris.
- Nice shoes or sandals
 - Flip-flops are not permitted.

Concert Recordings

Please note that if you record MCCL concerts using your personal recording devices, you are *not* permitted to make copies of your recordings due to copyright laws. Thanks for your cooperation. Any recordings made by the host church are solely for internal use by the directors for evaluation and growth.

Concert Offerings

MCCL accepts a free-will offering at concerts instead of requiring concert guests to purchase tickets like many other arts organizations do. Contributions are welcome from everyone who attends a concert, including parents. Donors who write a check for \$25 or more will receive a tax-deductible receipt from Lancaster Mennonite School. Checks should be payable to LM/MCCL. Please write MCCL on the memo line.

Tours and Festivals

Local Tour Day

Local tour day is an annual spring one-day tour for Carol, Concert, and Chamber choirs and includes singing at schools, retirement communities, and local ministries with the purpose of serving the local community, increasing confidence in singing, and broadening awareness about MCCL.

Attendance is expected. MCCL will provide a letter requesting permission for singers to be excused from school that day.

Summer Tour

Summer tour is a multi-day tour in mid-June for Concert and Chamber choirs. It promotes a sense of community within the performing choirs as well as the broader church. Summer tour includes educational components, such as a choral masterclass and local attractions, and serves as a culmination of the choir year. Fee for summer tours is not included in tuition. Tour-specific fundraisers may be offered.

Attendance is expected. However, MCCL understands that due to vacation or other conflicts some singers may not be able to participate. Summer tour commitment forms will be distributed during the fall or early in the spring semester.

Summer Tour Schedule (subject to change)

- June 2024
 - Concert Choir to Philadelphia and/or New Jersey (2 – 3 days)
 - Chamber Choir to New York City (2 – 4 days)
- June 2025
 - Concert Choir to Virginia, Washington D.C., and Maryland (4 – 5 days) possibly including Music in the Parks at Hershey Park.
 - Chamber Choir international tour with Eastern Mennonite Missions (2 – 3 weeks)

Chamber Choir International Tour

MCCL partners with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) for an international choral mission trip every three years.

- To be eligible to participate in an international tour, singers who sang with MCCL in prior years are expected to have participated in stateside tours.
- Space is limited for international tours. Singers who want to participate must apply and be approved by EMM and MCCL. Priority will be given to singers who meet requirements and who sang the year preceding the international tour year.

Music in the Parks (Hersheypark)

MCCL Concert Choir singers participate in a choral adjudication by a panel of experienced master teachers every three years. Singers enjoy rides at Hersheypark after their performance and end the day at an awards ceremony. Fee for this opportunity is not included in tuition.

Rosedale Bible College Chorus Festival

MCCL Chamber Choir singers participate in a three day choral festival with other youth choirs every two or four years. Fee for this opportunity is not included in tuition.

Choir Calendar

- 1. Transfer all dates and times to your family calendar.**
 - a. Complete an “Excused Absence /Tardy Request Form” at the start of the choir season with any known or potential conflicts for the whole year.
 - b. The form can be found on Member Portal of the website and will be a part of registration.
 - c. The form can be used at any time during the semester when a conflict becomes known.
- 2. Rehearsals are held every Tuesday even if not listed on the calendar.**
- 3. Fall semester is August 22 through December 3, 2023.**
- 4. Spring semester is January 2 through April 30, 2023 with one additional rehearsal and concert in May/June, as well as summer tour in June for Concert and Chamber choirs.**
- 5. Other dates listed below indicate specific times, locations, or changes for rehearsals, retreats, & concerts.**

Calendar Key

BHMC Blossom Hill Mennonite Church
NMC Neffsville Mennonite Church

Rehearsals Times and Locations

Carol Choir rehearsal	Neffsville Mennonite Church	6:15 – 7:20 p.m.
Concert Choir rehearsal	Neffsville Mennonite Church	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Men’s Ensemble rehearsal	Blossom Hill Mennonite Church	6:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Chamber Choir rehearsal	Blossom Hill Mennonite Church	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

2022 Fall Semester

Day	Date	Time	Location	Activity	Carol	Concert	Chamber
Tues	Aug. 22	6:15 – 7:00 p.m.	NMC	Rehearsal for singers <i>new</i> to Carol Choir.	X		
		6:30 – 8:00 p.m.	BHMC	Rehearsal for <i>all</i> Chamber Choir singers			X
		7:15 – 8:00 p.m.	NMC	Rehearsal for singers <i>new</i> to Concert Choir (includes rising 6 th grade MCCL singers and/or singers from Choristers)		X	
Tues	Aug. 29	First rehearsal for all singers. Regular rehearsal & location times.					
		6:15 – 7:20 p.m.	NMC		X		
		7:00 – 7:30 p.m.	NMC	Parents/Guardians join Carol Choir singers for fall information meeting. <small>Please have one parent/guardian attend for each household.</small>	X		
		7:00 – 8:30 p.m.	NMC			X	
		6:30 – 7:00 p.m.	NMC				X tenor/bass
		7:00 – 8:30 p.m.	BHMC				X
Tues	Sept. 5	Regular rehearsal times & locations for all choirs and singers.					
		7:00 – 7:30 p.m.	NMC	Parents/Guardians join Concert Choir singers for fall information meeting. <small>Please have one parent/guardian attend for each household.</small>		X	
		8:30 – 9:00 p.m.	BHMC	Parents/Guardians join Chamber Choir singers for fall information meeting. <small>Please have one parent/guardian attend for each household.</small>			X
Sat	Sept. 30	8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	NMC	Rehearsal retreat with breakfast <small>Parents attend breakfast from 8:00 to 8:45 a.m. Singers wear MCCL t-shirt; formal uniform distribution</small>	X		
		9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	NMC	Rehearsal retreat with lunch <small>Singers wear MCCL t-shirt; formal uniform distribution</small>			X tenor/bass
		1:00 – 6:30p.m.	NMC	Rehearsal retreat with supper <small>Singers wear MCCL t-shirt; formal uniform distribution</small>		X	X alto/sop.
Tues	Oct. 17	8:15 – 8:45 p.m.	NMC	Summer Tour Information Meeting <small>Chamber Choir rehearses at NMC. Regular rehearsal time</small>		X	X

Day	Date	Time	Location	Activity	Carol	Concert	Chamber
TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Concert Choir and Chamber Choir Fall Party Attendance for singers is encouraged & optional.		X	X
Fri	Nov. 3	4:30 – 6:30 p.m.	NMC	Presentation by and rehearsal with guest artists for Christmas concerts Singers wear MCCL t-shirt.		X	X
		4:30 – 6:00 p.m.	NMC	Presentation by and rehearsal with guest artists for Christmas concerts Singers wear MCCL t-shirt.	X		
		9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. 5:30 – 9:30 p.m.	BHMC	Jar Fundraiser Preparation Parent & singer participation strongly encouraged. Please sign up for a two- to three-hour shift. Siblings age 10+ may help. Supper provided. All singers pick up jars at BHMC before 9:30 p.m.	X	X	X
Sat	Nov. 4	8:45 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.	NMC	Rehearsal with guest artists for Christmas concerts Singers wear MCCL t-shirt. Singers bring a packed lunch.			X
		8:45 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.	NMC			X	
		10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	NMC		X		
Fri	Nov. 10	6:00 – 9:00 p.m.	BHMC	MCCL Soups, Songs, & Sweets Alumni, current families, and community members will enjoy good food and singing together. Attendance for current singers and families is optional.	X	X	X
Tues	Nov. 21	Regular rehearsal time for Carol Choir extended to 7:30 p.m. Concert and Chamber Choirs extended rehearsal until 8:45 p.m.	NMC	Dress rehearsal <i>All singers wear MCCL formal concert attire.</i> Chamber Choir rehearses at NMC.	X	X	X
Tues	Nov. 28	Regular rehearsal time for Carol Choir extended to 7:30 p.m. Concert and Chamber Choirs extended rehearsal until 8:45 p.m.	NMC	Chamber Choir rehearses at NMC. Jar Fundraiser payment due Music folder collection Concert & Chamber tour deposit & covenant due	X	X	X
Thur	Nov. 30	5:30 p.m. Report: Cham/Con 5:45 p.m. Report: Carol 7:00 p.m. Performance	Neffsville Mennonite Church, Lancaster	Concert	X	X	X
Sat	Dec. 2	1:30 p.m. Report: Cham/Con 1:45 p.m. Report: Carol 3:00 p.m. Performance	First United Methodist Church, Lancaster	Concert	X	X	X
Sun	Dec. 3	2:30 p.m. Report: Cham/Con 2:45 p.m. Report: Carol 4:00 p.m. Performance	TBD	Concert	X	X	X
Sat	Dec. 9	TBD (late morning or early afternoon)	Various Nursing Homes TBD	Caroling Attendance for singers & families is encouraged & optional.	X	X	X

2023 Spring Semester

Day	Date	Time	Location	Activity	Carol	Concert	Chamber
		First spring semester rehearsal. Regular rehearsal times & locations for all singers.					
Tues	Jan. 2	6:15 – 6:35 p.m.	NMC	Parents join Carol Choir singers for spring semester & Do-Re-Mi \$ Fundraiser Information meeting. Please have one parent/guardian attend for each household.	X		
		7:00 – 7:20 p.m.	NMC	Parents join Concert Choir singers for spring semester & Do-Re-Mi \$ Fundraiser Information meeting. Please have one parent/guardian attend for each household.		X	
		8:30 – 8:50 p.m.	BHMC	Parents join Chamber Choir singers for spring semester & Do-Re-Mi \$ Fundraiser Information meeting. Please have one parent/guardian attend for each household.			X
Tues	Jan 9	7:00 – 7:20 p.m.	NMC	New Parent Meeting for parents of singers new to MCCL	X	X	X
Tues	Jan. 23	Regular rehearsal times Arrive 15 min early to turn in letters.	NMC	Do-Re-Mi \$ fundraiser envelopes due. Chamber Choir rehearses at NMC.	X	X	X
Sun	Jan. 28	1:00 – 6:00 p.m.	NMC	Do-Re-Mi \$ Rehearsal Marathon Wear MCCL t-shirt; formal uniform distribution		X	X alto/sop
Sun	Feb. 4	1:00 – 4:30 p.m.	NMC	Do-Re-Mi \$ Rehearsal Marathon Wear MCCL t-shirt; formal uniform distribution	X		
		1:00 – 6:00 p.m.	NMC				X tenor/bass
Sun	Feb. 11	TBD	TBD	Do-Re-Mi \$ Rehearsal Marathon Snow make-up	X	X	X
Tues	Feb. 13	Regular rehearsal time for Carol Choir. Concert and Chamber Choirs extended rehearsal until 8:45 p.m.	NMC/ BHMC	Photo Night All singers wear formal concert attire.	X	X	X
Fri	Feb. 16	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.	NMC	MCCL Family Fun Night Attendance for singers & families is encouraged & optional.	X	X	X
Sun	Mar. 10	1:00 – 6:00 p.m.	BHMC	Rehearsal Retreat			X
Tues	Mar. 19	Regular rehearsal times	NMC	Dress rehearsal <i>All singers wear MCCL formal concert attire.</i> Chamber Choir rehearses at NMC.	X	X	X
Thur.	Mar. 21	5:00 p.m. Report: Cham/Conc 5:30 p.m. Report: Carol 7:00 p.m. Performance	TBD	Concert at a local retirement home Location TBD	X	X	X

Day	Date	Time	Location	Activity	Carol	Concert	Chamber
Thur.	Apr. 4	7:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Lancaster City	Local Tour Day (Concert & Chamber choirs) Noon concert open to the public		X	X
Fri	Apr. 5	8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Lancaster City	Local Tour Day (Carol Choir) Noon concert open to the public	X		
Sat	April 13	2:30 p.m. Report: Carol/Concert 4:00 p.m. Performance	Lancaster Church of the Brethren, Lancaster	Concert Series (Concert and Chamber choirs only)		X	X
Sun	April 21	2:30 p.m. Report: Cham/Con 2:45 p.m. Report: Carol 4:00 p.m. Performance	TBD	Concert Prelude Music and Choristers I and II will participate.	X	X	X
Tues	April 23	During regular rehearsal times	NMC	Join the Song Open rehearsal for potential singers. Current singers are encouraged to bring friends.	X	X	
Sun	April 28	2:30 p.m. Report: Cham/Con 2:45 p.m. Report: Carol 4:00 p.m. Performance	Neffsville Mennonite Church, Lancaster	Concert Uniform & music binder collection for Carol Choir and Concert/Chamber choir singers not participating in summer tour.	X	X	X
Tues	April 30	5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Family Picnic	NMC	MCCL Family Picnic Attendance at the picnic for singers & families is encouraged & optional.	X	X	X
		6:30 – 7:15 p.m. Reh: Carol Choir		Rehearsal for all singers Current 5 th grade singers will participate with Concert Choir and current 8 th grade singers will participate with Chamber Choir.			
		7:15 – 8:15 p.m. Reh: Concert & Chamber choirs					
Tues	May 28	6:15 – 7:20 p.m. Carol Choir	NMC	Rehearsal for all singers All singers' attendance is required. Preparation for MCCL 25 th Anniversary Concert	X		
		7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Concert Choir				X	
		6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Chamber Choir					X
		8:30 – 9:15 p.m.	NMC	Concert Choir and Chamber Choir Summer Tour meeting for parents and singers		X	X
Tues	June 4	TBD	Landis Homes Retirement Community	Pre-Tour Concert		X	X
	June 7-9			Concert Choir Summer Tour to Philadelphia Chamber Choir Summer Tour to New York City		X	X
Sun	June 9	TBD afternoon rehearsals for all singers with alumni 6:30 p.m. Performance	Lancaster Mennonite School, Lancaster	MCCL 25th Anniversary Celebration & Concert More details coming	X	X	X

Financial Responsibilities

Registration Fee (non-refundable fee per singer)

Carol, Concert, Chamber auditioned choirs

\$100 on or before July 21, 2023

\$125 after July 21, 2023*

*New families who register within a week of auditioning and receiving acceptance letter are eligible for the \$100 registration fee, even if after July 21 deadline.

Annual Tuition

Tuition funds about one-third of the MCCL annual budget. Fundraisers, donations, business sponsorships, and offerings make up the balance of our income. Operating expenses include rehearsal and concert venue rental, insurance, publicity, sheet music, guest clinicians and musicians, uniforms, and administrative costs.

Annual tuition includes over 90 hours of in-person choral instruction through rehearsals, concerts, retreats, and local tour day. There are also opportunities for extracurricular events, such as choral festivals, collaborative choral events, and social events. Additionally, singers receive at-home instruction through practice assignments on a weekly basis.

Tuition averages \$32 a month (10 months) for singers in grades 2 – 5 and \$39/month (10 months) for singers in grades 6 – 12. MCCL offers various payments schedules, as well as tuition assistance.

First Child Tuition

Carol Choir* Six payments of \$52, two payments of \$156, or one payment of \$312.

Concert Choir* Six payments \$65, two payments for \$195, or one payment of \$390.

Chamber Choir* Six payments \$65, two payments for \$195, or one payment of \$390.

Men's Ensemble Two payments of \$20 or one payment of \$40.

(tenors/basses in 9-12 grade)

Additional Child Tuition

\$312 per year for each additional child in Carol, Concert, and/or Chamber Choir

*In addition, families participate in one fall and one spring semester fundraiser.

*Tuition is not prorated for singers who participate for one semester only.

Tuition Transfer for Choristers

If a singer who has paid for the full year transfers from Choristers to Carol or Concert Choir for second semester, 50% of the Choristers tuition will be credited toward Carol or Concert Choir tuition.

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. MCCL does not want tuition to hinder any singer from participation. Tuition assistance is available to those who sing the entire year and is also available to families new to the MCCL program in January. The tuition assistance application and non-refundable deposit is due with choir registration. Applications received by the early deadline will be given priority.

Fundraisers

Fundraisers serve as team-building events for singers and their families and provide a portion of the MCCL budget. They help offset the difference between tuition and the actual cost of the MCCL program. Singers and families are expected to participate in fundraisers or pay an opt-out fee, if preferred. If a family bypasses fundraiser participation through the required opt-out fee, the payment is not tax deductible.

- Fall Jar Fundraiser (Carol/Concert/Chamber)
Each family will receive 15 food mixes to sell. Mixes are \$9.50 each.
Opt-out fee is \$142.50 per family.
- Spring Do-Re-Mi-Dollars Fundraiser (Carol/Concert/Chamber)

1 singer per family	10 names or opt-out fee of \$150
2 singers per family	20 names or opt-out fee of \$300
3+ singers per family	25 names or opt-out fee of \$375
- Specific optional fundraisers for Concert and Chamber choirs' multi-day tours and other events might be offered.

Business Sponsorship and Tuition Discounts

Each year, business sponsors are invited to partner with MCCL. These partnerships with local business owners strengthen the MCCL program and provide a portion of the MCCL budget. There are five levels of sponsorship:

Concert Series Underwriter	\$5,000 per concert season
Presto	\$3,000
Allegro	\$1,500
Allegretto	\$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 the Managing Director at mccl@lancastermennonite.org. 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 Allegro business partner
\$100 per family for an Allegretto business partner
\$ 50 per family for an Andante business partner

Refer a New MCCL Family and Tuition Discounts

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 because 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.

Formal and Informal Uniform Fees

All Carol and Concert singers pay a \$30 yearly fee to rent MCCL concert attire. Each Chamber Choir lady is responsible to purchase a black dress (approximately \$80) from MCCL, which will be hers to keep. Each Chamber Choir gentleman is responsible to purchase two colored dress shirts and a spring season bow tie (approximately \$80) from MCCL, which will be his to keep.

Carol and Concert Choir uniforms will be collected at the end of each season. There is a \$60 lost/late fee if uniform is not returned by the due date. Chamber Choir men’s fall season ties will be collected at the end of the fall season. MCCL will charge \$30 if the fall season tie is not returned by due date.

There is a \$12 fee for a replacement t-shirt (lost or needing a new size).

Music Fee

Music folders will be collected at the end of each season. There will be a \$60 charge for any music folder not returned by the due date. There will be a \$10 charge for any individual piece of music that is missing or damaged.

Tour Fee

An additional fee is charged for the annual Concert and Chamber Choir summer tour.

Contributions

Tax-deductible gifts may be sent to:

MCCL
PO Box 5146
Lancaster PA 17606

Please make check payable to MCCL/LMS and write MCCL on the memo line. Lancaster Mennonite School will send a tax-deductible receipt for donations of \$25 or more. For the Do-Re-Mi-Dollars fundraiser, tax-deductible receipts will be sent for donations of \$50 or more.

There is also an option for online giving at www.mennonitechilrenschoir.org/donate

Payment Policy

Payments include fees for tuition, uniforms, lost uniforms, lost music, fundraisers, tour, and other expenses. Payments should be submitted via check. Cash will not be accepted.

Outstanding payments are defined as payments that are not remitted according to the schedule defined by MCCL or an alternative payment schedule approved by the Choir Manager.

Any singer who has outstanding payments will not:

- receive a music folder
- receive a uniform
- participate in concerts, go on tour, or attend special activities

Refund Policy

Tuition paid, less a \$100 administrative fee, may be refunded through the fourth rehearsal of the semester. Tuition will not be refunded after the fourth rehearsal.

Payment for lost music or a lost uniform is refundable if the music or uniform is later returned in usable condition.

Fundraiser payments, uniform fees, and tour payments are not refundable or transferable.

Returned Check Fee

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

Instructions for Registration

1. Print this page.
2. Go to <http://www.mennonitechildrenschoir.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.