



NOTABLE NEWS

July 2025
Issue No. 8

SINGING AND SHOVELS

Pastor Edward of Waynesville, NC captured the spirit of MCCL's tour: "You don't bring your shovel—you bring your voice. Your voice is your shovel."

*"You don't bring
your shovel—you
bring your voice.
Your voice is
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That phrase echoed throughout tour as nearly 80 MCCL singers and chaperones journeyed through North Carolina and Virginia, offering healing not through tools, but through the harmony of their voices in locations that Hurricane Helene impacted in fall 2024.

Concerts, spontaneous and planned, became moments of deep connection for both singers and listeners. This tour emphasized music as the mission and connected in a special way with the work of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). Each concert offering was shared between MDS and MCCL.

At each location, host families welcomed the choir with open hearts and kitchens, and new friendships bloomed over shared meals and stories.

In Hendersonville, NC at a bridge rebuilt by MDS and Lutheran Disaster Relief (LDR) (photo above), singers heard firsthand from a local homeowner about the devastation his community experienced. His personal story highlighted the community's

resilience and the hope they felt after receiving help from MDS and LDR.

As Chamber singer Lia Charles reflected, the true gift wasn't just sharing music—it was discovering how that music could help make sense of joys and griefs for singers and concert attendees. Singing and shovels can both bring healing to the world!



**BUILDING
HOPE
75
YEARS**
1950 • 2025

SUMMER TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



Sharing daily concerts



Staying with host families each evening



Singing at and touring Biltmore Estate



Hiking at Crab Tree Falls



Amazing volunteer bus drivers, Sil and Kay Martin, and dedicated volunteer parent and alumni chaperones



ALUMNI STORIES

Each year, MCCL alumni are invited to be a part of the summer tour experience. They serve as singing alumni and as chaperones. This year, four alumni participated. Here are their reflections and stories:

MATTHEW BAUGHER

Drafter / Designer and Church Music Coordinator, Lebanon, PA



"As a teenager, singing with MCCL for four years taught me that hard work and excellence are not in opposition to love and passion—they complement each other, especially in singing. Tours always gave me great joy as I observed how the hopeful messages of our songs brought peace to the faces in our audiences. This summer, I was blessed to see how a tragedy has become an opportunity for the people affected by Hurricane Helene to enter into deeper friendship and solidarity with one another."

AARON HERSHEY

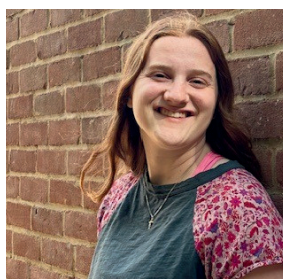
College Student, Music Education major, Lancaster Bible College, Lancaster, PA



"I sang with MCCL for six years, during which friendships and meaningful music—like "Oh Love" by Elaine Hagenberg and Dan Forrest's works—helped shape me. I am studying to be a music educator so music is still a part of my daily life. Annual tours were always a highlight each year in MCCL - living in close quarters with friends, traveling to new places, meeting new people, and making music constantly is like nothing else. This summer's tour had the added bonus of seeing the activities and planning from an educator-in-training lens."

MADDALENA MASCIALE-WALMER

College Student, Education major/music minor, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY



"I sang with MCCL for six years, growing from a quiet student into a confident musician and leader. Singing in MCCL shaped my faith, friendships, and musical journey—now continued as a college music minor, singer, and clarinetist. Tours are so impactful. I got to know friends better, experience wonderful memories together (especially because of the tech-free environment) and the pieces of music worked on all year go from amazing to phenomenal. On this tour, one song, "Cry No More", became especially meaningful as we shared its message of hope with flood survivors, revealing the power of music to comfort and connect."

ALLISON SHERER

Nurse Navigator at an Orthopedic Oncology office, Elizabethtown, PA



"I sang in MCCL for five years, and the memories of impromptu tour performances and four-part harmonies have stayed with me ever since. Being part of the choir community shaped my high school experience, deepened friendships, and gave me lasting joy—especially when I returned as a chaperone and saw how powerfully God continues to work through MCCL. Though I no longer sing in a choir, the music still lives in me. I was grateful for the chance to be a chaperone this year and it made my heart happy to see that singers still have the amazing opportunity that I had when I was in MCCL."

CELEBRATING SINGING SENIORS



KIRSTEN BLY - 1 YEAR IN MCCL

Favorite Memories: Being in MCCL has really helped me grow in my singing voice. I did not know how to sing before I came to MCCL and I am really grateful to have learned!

Meaningful song: A song that was meaningful for me this year is "Cry No More" because it talks about how when we are still in the darkness, God will draw us near even though we don't have the faith to seek him out. That is amazing to me.

Future plans: I plan to start a business selling my artwork.



JARED BOWMAN - 12 YEARS IN MCCL

Favorite Memory: The small group time on tours has really been a joy-filled space, whether we are walking between destinations, eating meals, or just hanging out.

Meaningful Song: This year, "Cry No More" was meaningful for me to sing, as both the text and actual notes (harmonies/melodies) communicate the constant presence of Jesus throughout our whole lives. In the song, we sing the lyrics "Christ within us, Christ among us" and the line "Cry no more." These two lines together emphasize Jesus's comforting, constant presence.

Future Plans: I plan to attend Messiah University for a double major in Environmental Engineering and General Music.



DONOVAN FOX - 2 YEARS IN MCCL

Favorite Memory: A moment that is memorable to me (although all of tour was phenomenal) was the flat tire incident while traveling home from the Rosedale Choral Festival. Together singers and chaperones successfully got the bus back on the road!

Meaningful Song: Two songs that are meaningful to me are "Cry No More" because of the closeness of God it talks about even through hard times and also "Modimo" because of how it shows that praising God can build bridges between languages and cultures.

Future Plans: I plan to attend Millersville University majoring in musical performance and education, as well as continue my career in the workforce.

CELEBRATING SINGING SENIORS



ARTURO VERAS - 13 YEARS IN MCCL

Favorite Memory: Definitely the international tour to the Czech Republic and Germany. It was very mind opening and a time where I found peace.

Meaningful Song: Two songs that really stuck with me are “Jubilate Deo” and “True Evangelical Faith”. There is no explanation for how music makes me feel: it is unique with every listen.

Future Plans: I want to pursue music in some form - perhaps production engineering or performance.



NOAH WEAVER - 7 YEARS IN MCCL

Favorite Memory: One highlight of my time in MCCL was the summer tour to the Czech Republic. It contained a number of firsts: first MCCL tour, first time riding in an airplane, first time leaving the US. I was also impacted by meeting so many kind strangers which shifted my view of the world.

Meaningful Song: My favorite song this year was “Jubilate Deo.” It was really fun to sing and is a good reminder to praise the Lord with what you have, which is something we all need to do more often.

Future Plans: I plan to take a gap year and enroll in the Guide program, an outdoor education and discipleship program at Camp Hebron in Halifax, PA.



MUSICIANSHIP CLASSES

An exciting addition to the MCCL program for the 2024 -2025 choir year is Musicianship Classes. Each week during rehearsal, singers in the auditioned choirs met in small groups for 15 minutes to focus on sight singing, rhythm reading, and music theory concepts.

Musicianship classes have profoundly impacted singers. As directors, we see the evidence of singers learning at each rehearsal, especially now that singers have been immersed in musicianship classes for a full year!

One way we have seen incredible growth is in individual singer confidence. Musicianship classes offer singers the opportunity to learn in a small group setting where each voice is heard - literally! - singing and speaking rhythms.

These designated times to practice musicianship skills have resulted in markedly stronger sight-reading abilities and greater comfort with music terminology. This allows singers to learn music faster in rehearsal and understand complex musical ideas. We are thrilled to see this growth and look forward to watching how these classes continue to increase MCCL singers' skills and confidence.



Rosemary Blessing
Artistic Director
Chamber Choir Director



Sarah Wingard
Carol and Concert
Choirs Director



SINGER REFLECTIONS



Charlotte
1st year in choir

In musicianship classes, I am learning how to read rhythms and how to follow the solfege scale.



Simon
5th year in choir

Musicianship classes are teaching me how to sing up and down the scales, what the different notes mean, and what different rhythms do.



Meredith
10th year in choir

Musicianship classes have helped me to learn different music markings and notations. They have also helped me become more confident in sight reading!

ADVISORY BOARD NEWS

Ten individuals serve on the MCCL Advisory Board, meeting five times a year to support the choir. Their contributions include offering counsel and prayer, speaking at concerts, assisting with events like our Do-Re-Mi Dollars Singing Marathon, and much more. Each board member shares their unique gifts through participation in one of three teams: HR and Board Development, Alumni and Recruitment, or Finance and Advancement. **This page highlights the work of our HR and Board Development Team.**

WHO: Lorri Bentch, Lamar Myers, and Durrelle Leaman



WHAT DOES THIS TEAM DO?

- Supports MCCL staff by helping create an encouraging, healthy work environment.
- Shapes policies and practices that promote long-term organizational success.
- Clarifies board roles and functions contributing to strong governance.

WHY DO YOU SERVE:

- Durrelle: "What energizes me is witnessing MCCL's real impact on kids and families—their musical growth, blossoming confidence, and the strong sense of community that emerges. **It's incredibly inspiring to be even a small part of that journey.**"
- Lorri: "MCCL is a diverse, gifted group that flourishes through shared music—a divine gift that brings unity and invites the Spirit. I'm deeply thankful that singers get to experience something so unique and beautiful. **I've lived in many places and have never encountered anything quite like MCCL.**"
- Lamar: "I'm grateful for the Board's thoughtful, mission-driven leadership. **We take our work seriously, engaging challenges and opportunities with purpose**, supported by strong staff and guided by Christ's spirit in every discussion."

A SERVANT'S HEART - FAITH WITH MUSIC EDUCATION



Lamar recently concluded nine years of dedicated service on the MCCL Advisory Board, though his connection to the choir began in 1998 when his wife, Patricia Strong Myers, founded MCCL. His commitment, wisdom, and humility deeply blessed our board and staff. During his tenure, Lamar helped shape HR best practices, guided us through financial restructuring as interim treasurer, and continually encouraged us to remain rooted in God's call to excellent choral singing. His thoughtful, prayerful presence and genuine care for MCCL singers will be profoundly missed.

"My hope and prayer is that MCCL continues to 'keep the main thing the main thing' - that is that faith and music remain linked, as stated in the mission statement. To do so, I believe, promises great blessing for the singers, the families of singers, the local church, the broader church and the world at large, as it has up to this point - all for the glory of God." - Lamar Myers

2024-2025 YEAR AT A GLANCE

More than 160 singers in kindergarten through grade 12 participated in MCCL auditioned choirs and non-auditioned classes.



55

congregations



45

schools
(homeschool counted as one)



15

denominations



4

local counties



11k+

hours of
combined classes,
rehearsals, retreats,
and at home practice



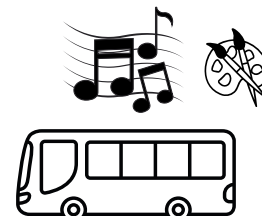
10+

concerts shared with the
community during our
Christmas and spring
concert series and local
tour days



9

languages sung in our
Christmas and spring
concert series (*English,
German, Latin, Spanish,
Zulu, Cantonese, Damara,
Shona, and isiZulu.*)



8

5 days of summer tour to
North Carolina & Virginia
(*middle & high school*)
and
3 days of "Music &
More" summer camp
(*elementary*)

500+



parent, board, & community
member volunteer hours in the
areas of:

- music library
- mailings
- chaperones for concerts, local
tour days, and summer tour
- fundraisers
- snacks
- and SO much more!

11

Guest musicians and clinicians
who shared musical expertise in
concerts and rehearsals.



CHOIR YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

LOCAL TOUR DAYS



On March 28, Chamber and Concert choirs shared music with students at Hinkletown Mennonite School and Ephrata Mennonite School, and residents at Keystone Villa. They also enjoyed spontaneous singing for passersby at Green Dragon! Singer Eliita noted: **"I really enjoyed singing at Hinkletown Mennonite because of the joy shown on the teachers' and younger students' faces."**

Singer Naomi expressed how meaningful it was to get to meet and talk with the residents after the concert at Keystone Villa: **"They were all so touched and grateful that we could sing for them. I think that serving people through music is just such an amazing opportunity. "**



Carol Choir's Local Tour Day on April 10 was filled with fun moments—from exploring new spaces and sharing music with diverse audiences, to celebrating with free chocolate and joyful singing. Despite the rainy weather, singers brought warmth and energy to Lancaster Mennonite School, Woodcrest Villa, and Park City Mall. A heartwarming highlight came when singers joined nursing home residents in a spontaneous sing-along, showing in a special way how music connects generations.

ROSEDALE CHORAL FESTIVAL



In April, the Chamber Choir traveled to Rosedale Bible College in Ohio for a three-day choral festival with Mennonite school choirs from Iowa and Ohio. From the joyful bus ride to engaging rehearsals to a powerful closing concert, singers connected with new friends and each other through the common bond of singing.

MCCL VOICE LESSON PROGRAM



Sixteen MCCL singers took part in the spring voice recital this May, celebrating their growth in vocal technique, independence, and overall health developed through lessons with MCCL voice instructor, Elisa Chodan. The recital highlighted the dedication and progress each singer made through consistent practice and commitment this season.

25 YEARS OF SINGING

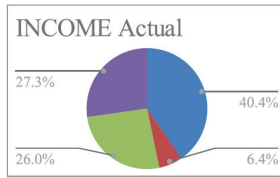


We are proud to honor MCCL's first two graduates who have sung from Prelude Music (K & gr. 1) to Chamber Choir - Arturo Veras and Jared Bowman. Their combined 25 years of singing with MCCL reflect a deep commitment to music, community, and growth. We created our first-ever MCCL sweatshirts to celebrate!

BY THE NUMBERS

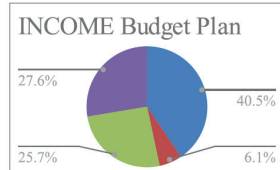
INCOME Actual Actual as of 6.30.2025

Donations & Grants	\$125,179
Concert Offerings	\$19,749
Fundraisers	\$80,581
Tuition & Activity Fees	\$84,557
Total	\$310,066



INCOME Budget Plan for 2024-2025

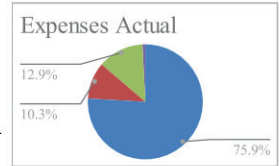
Donations & Grants	\$ 102,250
Concert Offerings	\$ 15,500
Fundraisers	\$ 65,000
Tuition & Activity Fees	\$ 69,769
Total	\$252,519



EXPENSES Actual

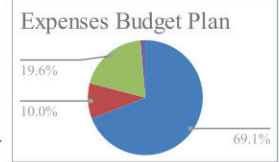
Actual as of 6.30.2025

Music Program (rehearsals, retreats, concerts, guest artist clinicians, staff, supplies, etc.)	\$ 204,774
Development Fundraising	\$ 27,838
Administrative	\$ 34,874
Publicity	\$ 2,155
Total	\$ 269,641



EXPENSES Budget Plan for 2024-2025

Music Program (rehearsals, retreats, concerts, guest artist clinicians, staff, supplies, etc.)	\$ 175,532
Development Fundraising	\$ 25,310
Administrative	\$ 49,778
Publicity	\$ 3,532
Total	\$ 254,152



Each year, we are inspired and encouraged by the many individuals and businesses who are a part of making the MCCL program possible! Thank you!

Your gifts of time, prayer, and financial support bless each singer and strengthen the entire MCCL community. We are deeply grateful for every expression of generosity—each one helps nurture and sustain the ministry of MCCL.

Right now, we're in a season of discernment. We're reflecting on how to steward the work God has called us to - nurturing children and youth in faith formation and personal growth through the gift of excellent choral arts - and we are dreaming about what lies ahead. A question we return to again and again is: *How do we continue MCCL's mission while making sure it remains accessible and beneficial to all young singers?*

We believe **Sustained Notes**—a giving initiative focused on strategic planning—is a vital part of the answer. This effort invites supporters to make generous annual commitments that strengthen MCCL's current programs and nurture its singers, while also sustaining the choir's long-term viability. **Will you join us and "sing" alongside our young singers, helping them grow in teamwork, musical skill, attentive listening, and deepened faith shaped by music from the global church?**

Your participation in this next "musical measure" of MCCL will transform lives!



Maria Bowman
Maria Bowman
Managing Director



Douglas Garrett
Douglas Garrett
Advisory Board Treasurer



Scan this QR code
to learn more
about Sustained Notes

Thank you!

Each year, generous support from local businesses helps MCCL nurture young voices and foster the impact of community choral music. These sponsorships are more than contributions—they're investments in the growth, creativity, and faith formation of every singer.



Sobota Leasing, LLC



To become a sponsor, visit: <https://mennonitechilrenschoir.org/about/sponsors/>



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Lancaster, PA 17606

mccl@lancastermennonite.org

717-455-7025

www.mennonitechildrenschoir.org

... training children and youth to glorify Jesus Christ through excellent choral singing. We honor and celebrate music as a gift from God by creating exceptional choral music, fostering community, and nurturing character.



Parents: if this is addressed to your child who has established a new address, please send updated address to mccl@lancastermennonite.org. Thank you!



JOIN *THE MCCL SONG*

Register for classes

Prelude Music: K & 1st grade

Choristers I: 2nd - 5th grade

Choristers II: 6th - 8th grade

Audition for choirs

Carol Choir: 2nd - 5th grade

Concert Choir: 6th - 8th grade

Chamber Choir: 9th - 12th grade

Your voice
is valued!



Classes meet on Tuesday evenings for 8 weeks in fall and spring.

Choirs rehearse on Tuesday evenings from late August through early May with a break in December and perform concerts in December, April, and May.

For more information or to schedule an audition visit:
www.mennonitechildrenschoir.org/join/register