

Lakeshore Chorale to celebrate 40th Season

The Lakeshore Chorale, an auditioned choral organization located in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, will celebrate its fortieth season in 2022-2023. The Lakeshore Chorale is one of the oldest independent, choral organizations in the state of Wisconsin. The group was founded in 1983, by Dr. Paul Almjeld while he was teaching at Lakeland University.

Currently, the Chorale is directed by Neil Bubke and accompanied by Joseph Hauer. Bubke reflected, "It's an honor to direct such a fine community chorus. It's no surprise that Lakeshore Chorale is one of the oldest ensembles of its kind in Wisconsin. The Sheboygan community places a high value on music and the arts, and our success is a direct outgrowth of that. Unlike many groups who struggled to retain membership in the wake of covid, our adult choir grew!"

The Chorale consists of nearly 45 auditioned members from Sheboygan and surrounding counties. The group has an extensive and varied repertoire, including Palestrina, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Brahms, Gilbert and Sullivan, Spirituals, Folk Music, and PDQ Bach. It has provided singers and accompanying instrumentalists the opportunity to participate in performances of high-quality sacred and secular choral works.

Dr. Almjeld recalled, "One of the requirements for completing my Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Illinois was to provide a public concert of representative choral music. I gathered together a group of musical friends and former students to present the concert. It was a loosely organized, thirty-voice group with no name, no library and no funds."

The 40th anniversary celebration will include each of the previous directors. Dr. Linda Jacobs, the second director of the Chorale, will direct a selection on October 23 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Sheboygan. The concert will include selections from Dan Forrest's *Requiem for the Living* accompanied by a chamber orchestra. Bubke noted, "Dan Forrest is one of the top composers of choral music in his generation. I'm excited to present portions of his *Requiem for the Living* this season. The music is honest, poignant, and challenging."

Wayne Wildman, who stepped into the director role when Dr. Jacobs retired, will participate in the holiday concert on December 4 at St. Peter Claver Parish, Sheboygan. Dr. Paul Thompson, who directed the Chorale after Wildman retired, will participate in the annual Valentine gala on February 11 at the Plymouth Arts Center. Dr. Paul Almjeld will participate in the final concert of the year on May 6 at First Congregational UCC, Sheboygan. Each of the concerts will offer a variety of excellent choral music accompanied by professional musicians.

In thinking about the Chorale, Dr. Almjeld noted the generous support the group has received over the years from the Sheboygan community. Almjeld said, "As a choral conductor and music educator, I wanted to create an outlet for the talented singers in the community. With the help and support of Fred Hollander, Gene Conger, Mary Kohler and others, we determined it would be worth the time and effort to form a choir to fill this void. I had no idea that 40 years later the Chorale would still be fulfilling this mission!" Mary Kohler said recently, "We were having so much fun, we decided to continue the group even though Paul [Almjeld] had finished his project."

For nearly 30 years, the Lakeshore Chorale organization has also included auditioned youth choirs; two for elementary and middle school students, and a chamber choir for high school students. The youth choirs join the adults for the October and December concerts. They will present their own concert on April 16, 2023 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Sheboygan.

The Lakeshore Chorale is a 501 (c)3 organization and is deeply appreciative of the on-going support of many in the Sheboygan area community. Tickets are available as a season package for all five concerts or at the door for individual concerts. Follow the link on the website: www.LakeshoreChorale.org