

O Holy Night

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O HOLY NIGHT

"Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light" arr. Johann Sebastian Bach

This traditional Christmas hymn comes from Lutheran pastor, Johann Rist, in 1641. He originally wrote a 12-stanza poem on the incarnation that was later paraphrased and adapted as a hymn. It recalls the brilliant light at the heralding of the angels and links it metaphorically to the light of our salvation—Jesus Christ. The tune "Ermuntre Dich" was composed by Johann Shop for this text in 1641 and famously harmonized by J.S. Bach in 1734.

"Hodie, Christus natus est" arr. Healey Willan

This Willan arrangement comes from the period of Gregorian chants sung at Christmas. The translation of the Christmas antiphon is as follows:

*Today is Christ born; today the Savior has appeared;
Today the Angels sing, the Archangels rejoice;
Today the righteous rejoice, saying:
Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia!*

Healey Willan [1880-1968] was an Anglo-Canadian organist and composer of over 800 works including operas, symphonies, chamber music, and pieces for band, orchestra, organ, and piano. He is best known for his church music.

"The Dream Isaiah Saw" arr. Thomas H. Troeger & Glenn L. Rudolph

Soloists: Christopher Lutz-Long (Saturday) & Peter Hemperly (Sunday)

Dr. Thomas H. Troeger [1945-2022] and Glenn L. Rudolph [b. 1951]. The text of this anthem comes from Dr. Troeger's volume *Borrowed Light: Hymn Texts, Prayers and Poems* published in 1994. Mr. Rudolph is a native of Pittsburgh and was commissioned by The Bach Choir of Pittsburgh to create this piece in 2001. He completed the music on September 30th and "it was clear that *The Dream Isaiah Saw* should be dedicated to those who perished on September 11, 2001. The Dream begins with a single voice paraphrasing Isaiah's vision of peace and harmony among God's creation. Thomas Troeger's poem "Lion and Oxen Will Sleep in the Hay" is a remarkable synthesis of the ancient prophet's vision and the circumstances of our present day world. This musical setting strives to bring Thomas Troeger's words to life, that they may take hold in our hearts and move us toward a realization of Isaiah's dream."

"In the Bleak Midwinter" arr. Philip Stopford

Soloist: Allison Deratzian

This Christmas poem is one of the most recognized of the Christmas season. We often hear the music of Harold Darke or Gustav Holst bringing forth this rich text. In 2006 this piece was commissioned by Dr. Barbara Callender for the Chamber Choir of Victoria College, Belfast, Northern Ireland. Originally written for SSAA voicing, later it was expanded for the SATB Choir and Organ. The new melody engages the listener as the poem grows to the pinnacle with the presence of the Heavenly Host and then descends to Mary and her kiss upon the child born on that holy night in a Bethlehem manger.

"See Amid the Winter's Snow" arr. David Wilcocks

Soloist: Marian Henry

See Amid the Winter's Snow is also known as "The Hymn for Christmas," an English Christmas carol, written by Edward Caswall and first published in 1858. The tune heard at this concert was composed by Sir John Goss in 1871 with the title "Humility." Sir David V. Wilcocks [1919-2015] was a British choral conductor, organist, and composer. From 1957 to 1974 he was the director of the Choir of King's College, Cambridge. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1977.

"Sicut Locutus est" arr. Johann Sebastian Bach

This piece is from Bach's Magnificat – BWV 243. The foundation of this text comes from St. Luke 1:46-55 which begins with "My soul doth magnify the Lord..." Bach composed this work in 1723 soon after taking up the position at St. Thomas Church, Leipzig. Bach often wrote at the beginning of his compositions "Jesus Help Me" and at the end of the piece, "To God Alone Be the Glory." *Sing joyful songs to God all ye nations, with rejoicing laud his holy name with songs of praise, sing joyful songs to God.*

"Alleluia" arr. Sven Lekberg

Dr. Sven Lekberg [1899-1984] was born in Chicago, studied at Northwestern University. His musical career focused on two schools – Dean of the School of Music at Augustana College, Illinois, and later [1940-1965] as Chairman of the Division of Fine Arts at Simpson College, Iowa where he and his wife developed the foundation of the music department. Today, Simpson College presents two Juniors of the Music Department the Sven & Mildred Lekberg Music Award who engendered the dedication and development as musicians. Dr. Lekberg's compositions were limited to art songs and sacred vocal works. Alleluia quite simply means "Praise the Lord" and descends from Hebrew. This composition takes us through an energetic and joyful statement of praise. The piece was first published in 1975.

"Christ the Appletree" arr. Stanford Scriven

Soloist: Beth Ann Krall

Christ the Appletree was first published as *The Tree of Life My Soul Hath Seen*, and was in London's *Spiritual Magazine* in August 1761. It was credited to "R.H." and this has been shown to refer to Reverend Richard Hutchins, a Calvinist Baptist clergyman then serving at Northamptonshire. The song may be an allusion to both, the apple tree in Song of Solomon 2:3 which has been interpreted as a metaphor representing Jesus, and to his description of his life as a true of like in Luke 13:18-19. Apple trees were commonly grown in England and there was an old English tradition of wassailing or wishing health to apple trees on Christmas Eve. Stanford E. Scriven [b. 1988] wrote this piece in 2009 and it was featured on the St. Olaf Choir 2010 Northeastern Tour. Today, Scriven is the director of a high school music program in Salem, Oregon.

"O Holy Night" arr. John Rutter

Soloist: Nicole Whalen ASL Interpreter: Dona Kern

The original title: *Cantique de Noel* is a sacred song for Christmas performance originally based on a French-language poem by poet Placide Cappeau, written in 1843. It was set to music by Adolphe Adam in 1847. The carol reflects on the birth of Jesus as humanity's redemption. The arrangement sung this year is by Sir John Rutter [Knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2007] created in 1981 as a part of a series of Rutter Christmas Carols.

"Midnight Clear" arr. Russell Schulz-Widmar

Soloist: Mark Henry

Russell Schulz-Widmar [b. 1944] is a composer, author, and conductor, and a former Professor of Liturgical Music at the Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, Texas. He takes Edmund Sears' text *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* and develops a new melodic setting that alternates between men's and women's voices published in 1993. Sears was a Unitarian Church Cleric who in 1849 wrote this poem and in 1850 the lyrics were set to "Carol," by Richard Storrs Willis. This Christmas Carol never mentions the name of God or Jesus, however is one of the most beloved of the season.

"Hallelujah Chorus" from *Messiah* arr. George Frederic Handel

This is selection No. 44 in the historic oratorio by George Frederick Handel. It is reported that Handel wrote this work in 24 days celebrating the birth, life, death, resurrection, and return of Jesus Christ. The entire work takes nearly 3 hours in full performance. Tradition notes that King George II was so moved by the performance that he stood and it was customary that everyone in the king's presence also had to stand. Handel once declared, "When I composed the Hallelujah Chorus, I did think I did see all Heaven before me and the great God Himself." For those who are able, you are invited to continue the tradition of standing!

"It's Beginning to Look Like Christmas" arr. Mark Hayes

It's Beginning to Look Like Christmas is a Christmas song written in 1951 by Meredith Willson. Tradition holds that Willson wrote this while staying at Yarmouth's Grand Hotel in Nova Scotia. All of the images are complete in the town of Yarmouth. The other possibility is that the song was inspired by the Historic Park Inn Hotel in his hometown of Mason City, Iowa. The Park Inn Hotel is the last remaining hotel in the world designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright. The song was made family by Perry Como, the Fontane Sisters, and Bing Crosby.

"The Lord Bless You and Keep You" arr. Peter C. Lutkin

P. C. Lutkin [1858-1931] was born in Chicago where he began music studies of organ, piano, and theory. For many years, he was the Canon Precentor of St. James Cathedral, Chicago. He was also a founder of the American Guild of Organists in 1896. This piece was copyrighted in 1900 and is based on Numbers 6:24-26. It is a well loved choral benediction. The Upper Perkiomen A Choir concludes every concert with this piece and invites choir alumni to join them in the performance. Likewise, this piece was the concluding piece for concerts of the Choral Arts Society of the Upper Perkiomen Valley under the direction of founder Richard F. Lampe, now Valley Choral Society.

**Program notes graciously provided by Rev. Dr. David Williams*

Selections from the Upper Perkiomen High School Choir: (Sunday only)

Director: Dr. Mark Thomas

"Mary, Did You Know?" arr. Victor C. Johnson

"Winter With You" arr. Pinkzebra

"Love's Pure Light, Silent Night" arr. Michael John Trotta



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Andrew Lutz-Long *Artistic Director*

Music Team

Andrew Lutz-Long is Associate Director of Music & Networking at Christ Lutheran Church, Allentown, PA since July 2022. Previously, Drew served as Director of Music Ministries at Trinity Lutheran Church, Perkasio, PA for 15 years.. He arrived at Trinity after graduating from Lebanon Valley College, Annville, PA with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music with a concentration in church music and administration. At Christ Allentown, Drew oversees the choir programs including Chancel Choir and all-female Immanuel Singers; he also oversees the outreach efforts of the church both within the local community and via its digital footprint.

In 2009, Drew was invited to join the staff of the Valley Choral Society, Pennsburg, PA, as Assistant Director and serve as an accompanist. He served this role working with Patricia Conrad as Artistic Director until the summer of 2018 when Drew was offered the directorship.

Since fall of 2014, Drew serves as Chapel Organist at Muhlenberg College in Egner Chapel. In this role, he helps plan worship for the Christian community gathering weekly on Sundays, and assists at other special campus events especially concerts involving organ accompaniment. Recently, Drew has expanded his role on campus as an adjunct professor of organ studies and performance.

Mary Beth Penjoke *Assistant Director*

Mary Beth Penjoke is a resident of Bucks County and an elementary music teacher for Penridge Area School District, recognized as one of the Best Communities for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation. She holds a degree in music education from Lebanon Valley College. Additionally, she holds a level one Orff Certificate and a First Steps in Music certification from the University of the Arts. She has served as a cooperating teacher for both West Chester University and Kutztown University. In her time outside of the classroom, she loves spending time hiking with her husband and twin sons.

Kristine Fosbenner *Accompanist*

Kristine Fosbenner is the Director of Music/Organist at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Telford, PA since 2008. She is also a Suzuki piano teacher at Milford Square Music Studio, Milford Square, PA, since 2011. Kris began her piano studies with Cindy Borowski and continued through high school. At Gettysburg College, she continued her studies under the instruction of Michael Matsinko, and was the principal accompanist for the Gettysburg College Concert Choir under the direction of Kermit Finstad. After college graduation, Kris continued to develop her accompanying skills by playing for various musical productions at a variety of local theater companies. Kris earned her piano pedagogy certificate from Westminster Choir College in 2014.

Currently, Kris is the President and Treasurer of the Lehigh Valley chapter of the National Music Teachers Association. She is also a member of the Lehigh Valley chapter of the American Guild of Organists and the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling and spending time with her 3 grown daughters and husband.

From the Artistic Director...

On Christmas Eve 1928, the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at Kings College, Cambridge, was first broadcast only ten years after its first incarnation. Alongside the early automobiles and airplanes of the 1920s, radio and recording technology made it possible to share traditions and experiences like never before. Since that time, the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols has been a benchmark followed and sought out by lovers of traditional choral music. The format followed is used and adapted around the world as the definition of tradition, held in tandem with new arrangements of centuries-old texts.

This spirit of long-range tradition evolving to new levels is where the concept of this concert began. As Valley Choral Society set out to plan its 40th Christmas concert, we were invited to be a part of the series of events celebrating a new organ and piano at New Goshenhoppen UCC. This concert allows us to return to some of our roots – in the Upper Perk Valley,

with colleagues in our history, and to some selections that were on the very first program of this chorus upon its founding. You will hear selections that we need to sing because of the place they fill in our hearts, and you will hear new arrangements that enrich our understanding of words on our lips since we were children. Valley Choral Society is delighted to have the opportunity to present this program in two special locations – Trinity Perkasio and New Goshenhoppen UCC – making use of the instruments they graciously invite us to use.

Thank you for being a part of this celebration year, and we hope to see you again this Spring!



-Drew



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Valley Choral Society is to produce outstanding music both in rehearsal and performance. In order to achieve our mission, we will:

- Challenge and educate
- Entertain and inspire
- Foster discipline and respect
- Develop growth in musicianship
- Encourage diversity and unity
- Share in the joy of music

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ABOUT THE CHOIR

Originally known as the Choral Arts Society of the Upper Perkiomen Valley, Valley Choral Society (VCS) was founded in 1983 by Richard F. Lampe. It was formed as a community choir composed of singers from the Upper Perkiomen Valley, however, as the enthusiasm grew for a community music program, membership continued to expand to its now multi-county composition including Montgomery, Bucks, Lehigh and Berks Counties.

Presenting major concerts in the late fall and spring, VCS performs a wide variety of music – from John Rutter’s Requiem to Broadway show tunes, from classical sacred music to well-loved music from the 1940s, from classic Christmas carols to the Beatles, from composers from past centuries to contemporary composers – all to the delight of appreciative audiences.

In addition to its major concerts, VCS has always had a rich history of community outreach that continues to expand with performances at community day events such as Quakertown Alive or Relay for Life, retirement communities throughout the area, and the annual “Make Music Upper Perk” event. In keeping with our mission statement, other opportunities to perform are welcome as scheduling allows.



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Sunday, May 19

Trinity Lutheran Church
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O Come, All Ye Faithful

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;
sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!

come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:
Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:
Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

Refrain

Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2
 Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade

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