

# MacKay United Church Choir Information Guide

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” Colossians 3:16



Welcome to the MacKay United Church Choir! We are happy to have you join us, and look forward to the times we will be making joyful music together. This booklet is meant to give you information about the choir, our practices and worship, as well as a bit about social activities. We are always happy to have new members join.

The ideal and mission of our Church calls us to serve one another. In the choir, we serve each other as much as we serve the community. Here you can build new friendships, deepen your faith, improve your singing skills, and your knowledge of music. The objective of the choir is to enhance worship by encouraging and leading the gathered assembly in song, and consequently, deepening our relationship with God. Through music, we serve those who gather, promoting the participation of all the people who gather together for worship.

## **Who can take part?**

Every member of the MacKay United Church Choir is also a member of the congregation. Our choir consists of new and experienced singers. Some have training, some do not. The choir welcomes people of all ages from youth to seniors and from a broad spectrum of ability. Although all of us need to be able to carry a tune, we do not require any previous vocal training, choral experience or the ability to read music.

While choristers bring different levels of musical skills and talent to the choir, as an ensemble we are called to maintain a high quality of music-making while supporting the congregation in song. Our choir director is committed to promoting musical and liturgical education and ensemble development for all levels of. Choir can be an excellent opportunity to develop great vocal technique and to advance our musicianship, as well as ensemble training. Choir members often find that their voices and their skills grow as a result of their involvement in the Choir.

We are a SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) choir. In addition to the MacKay United 'canon' of beloved hymns and traditional church music, our repertoire extends to the classics, as well as current church music. And we love to try music from every continent.



## **A little more about our Organist and Choir Director**

Parvaneh Eshghi has studied with renowned Canadian pianists Jean-Paul Sevilla, Andrew Tunis, Louis-Philippe Pelletier and Richard Raymond. She has been heard on CBC Stereo Ottawa and has recorded for the Jeunes Artistes program on CBOX-fm, Radio-Canada. Active with many solo and chamber performances, she was recently invited to play for Carmen on Tap, an exciting modern rendition of the opera, directed by Brent Krysa, starring Julie Nesrallah, Maghan McPhee, Richard Troxell and Benjamin Covey.

Parv has extensive training in singing, having studied with Ottawa soprano, Isabelle Lacroix, McGill professor/opera singer Johanne Kolomyjec and internationally renowned bass-baritone, Ingemar Korjus. She has been a vocal coach for professional singers for 18 years and has conducted choirs from St. Brigid's Catholic Church, where she programmed many fundraising concerts featuring choir and guest soloists, as well as at here at Mackay United Church.

Since her arrival, Parv has worked with the choir at improving technique, as well as introducing new music. In addition to giving piano lessons and voice coaching, Parv also performs once a year in MacKay United's Chamber Music Concert Series.

### **Choir Commitment:**

Participation in the choir requires a willingness to do the work necessary to be able to lead the congregation in musical prayer. The choir rehearses and participates as leaders in Worship from September to June, inclusive. There are expectations of commitment to practice and learning. Such work includes regular attendance at rehearsals during the week and immediately prior to the service. We rehearse every Thursday evening from 7:00pm - 8:30pm and on Sunday morning beginning at 9:40am. We are encouraged to practice at home as well, especially as we prepare for Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter.

If a chorister is going to miss a rehearsal or service, they should notify Parv in advance. Being on time means you are in your seat and ready to sing at the scheduled rehearsal time. We are encouraged to come a little early, so we are ready to warm up.

During the choir season, we are usually up front during worship, leading the congregation for hymns. Most of the hymns can be found in one of the hymnals, Voices United and More Voices. You will receive a personal copy of the hymnals for your use during the time you are in the choir. The list of hymns that we are going to be singing on a given Sunday is found in the bulletin, copies of which are available in the choir room by Thursday rehearsal.

Most weeks, our choir sings the anthem. Usually, the anthems are from our music library. Parv normally hands out music at evening rehearsals, but if you have missed a rehearsal where music was given out, you can ask Parv for it, and she will get the piece for you. Our choir operates in accordance with the spirit and law of copyright, and we are encouraged to use original scores.

### **Choir Etiquette**

The Choir promotes mutual respect among all of its members as well as the minister and other members of the congregation. We encourage each other

through positive support and guidance and we respect the value that each voice brings to our ensemble.

Any observations regarding repertoire or technique may be shared with Parv outside of the worship or rehearsals, to allow minimal disruption to momentum gained during rehearsals.

During both rehearsals and worship, we encourage choristers to refrain from casual talking or other interruptions while others are singing or when the director is giving instruction. While we recognize that there is a social aspect to being part of the Choir, rehearsal time is devoted to the task at hand.

In a world of environmental stressors, many people are finding themselves hyper-sensitive to scented products. For such people, the presence of scents can mean that they cannot participate in our ministry. For this reason, we ask that Choir members avoid the use of scented products as much as possible at worship and rehearsals.

### **Social time**

And we like to have fun! There is socialising before and after rehearsals. And, during the year, we get together outside of rehearsal time for tea nights, wine and cheese parties and potlucks. There is great food, great company, and great conversations!

If you have any questions about anything, ask anyone of us. We like to think of ourselves as a friendly group, and are happy to help!

