

New Choir Members



Jerry, MacKenzie, Anna & David

The Sanctuary Choir and Sanctuary Chorale are pleased to introduce new members. We're delighted that you have joined our ranks.

Jerry Monds, bass, is in his second year teaching pre-K to 6th grade music and choir at Oak Hill School. He's a native of Chattanooga, earned his undergraduate degree at Sewanee and his master's at MTSU. He's married to Becky (Callaway); their twins Bailey and Spencer are nearly 2 years old.

Mackenzie Cunningham, alto, graduated from Hume-Fogg High School and earned her 2015 bachelor's degree in vocal performance at the University of Oklahoma. Returning to Nashville, she works at Wiley & Brothers brokerage firm and loves Nashville's live music scene.

Anna Young, alto, and **David Young**, bass, moved to Nashville from Charleston, where they were choristers at 1st Scots Presbyterian. Anna grew up in Greenville, SC and graduated from Converse College in Spartanburg. She earned her master's degree at the Indiana University School of Music. David's bachelor's degree is from the University of South Carolina; he then moved to Chicago and sang with the Chicago Opera, later earning



Emily

his medical degree at the Medical University of South Carolina. David and Anna met as undergraduates, later reconnecting while singing with Florida opera companies. She is settling into her new position as Nashville Opera's Director of Education & Outreach while David is a first-year resident in otolaryngology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

Emily Stone, soprano, is a junior at Ravenswood High School and active in FPC children's music and milestone projects. She has studied piano since age 4, harp for five years, and participated in children's choir since first grade. When she's not studying or practicing, you might find her on the tennis court.

Alex Vorhaus, baritone, is a freshman at Brentwood High. He's been a choir member for many years and loves hymns.

He's interested in cooking and gardening, and is the new holder of a driver's license.



Alex, Claire & Rebecca

Claire Boling, soprano, is a Brentwood native and graduate of Brentwood Academy. She earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Tennessee and a master's degree at the Eastman School of Music, returning to Nashville in 2012. Her busy days include work as an associate representative at Northwestern Mutual and singing at FPC and Christ Church Cathedral. She sang in Nashville Opera's fall production of *Turandot*.

Rebecca Rogers, alto, is a senior classical voice performance major at Belmont University. A native of Jackson, Tennessee, she's currently auditioning for graduate schools. A talented baker, her specialty is red velvet cake (with cream cheese frosting, of course).

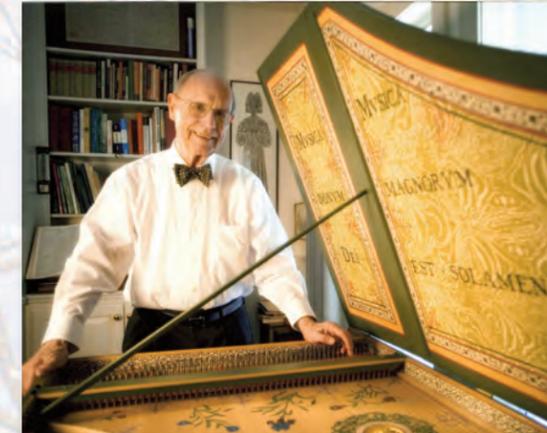
Soli Deo Gloria

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MUSIC MINISTRY AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Bach Cantata Performance in Memory of Dr. Henry Fusner

by Nick Bergin

Dr. Henry Fusner served First Presbyterian Church as Organist and Choirmaster from 1970-1989. He passed away earlier this year, leaving a number of his belongings to the church. Going through these possessions — a vast library of scores, a number of original compositions and correspondence with some of the foremost musicians of his day — one is struck by the passion and diligence with which Dr. Fusner pursued his vocation as a musician. In addition to these smaller items, he also left the church the beautiful harpsichord which now sits in the chancel — an instrument he assembled himself from a kit, even hand-painting the soundboard. To inaugurate the harpsichord, a number of choir members and a small chamber ensemble performed Bach's *Christ lag in Todesbanden* on Reformation Sunday, October 25, before a sizable audience. This concert was made possible by generous donations from Susan Bannen, David R. Linn and the Friends of Henry S. Fusner.



Young Singers in the Sanctuary Chorale

This summer, Alex Vorhaus, Shona Wood, and Claire Brantley added their voices to the Sanctuary Chorale, which sings at the 8:30 service each week. Alex is a freshman at Brentwood High School, Shona is in the 5th grade at the Oak Hill School, and Claire is a junior at Brentwood High School. Hats off to these young and intrepid singers for their leadership in worship! Also, if you're feeling inspired by their example, know that the choir is always happy to welcome new members. They rehearse at 6:15 on Wednesday evenings and at 7:45 on Sunday mornings. Please consider joining them!

Music Schedule

Sunday, Jan. 31, 4 P.M.
Nicholas Bergin, Organist
Music of Bach, Buxtehude,
Mendelssohn and
Rheinberger

Friday, Feb. 5, 6:15 P.M.
Be Our Guest:
Broadway Dinner Show
First Presbyterian Church
Sanctuary Choir and Friends
(Ticketed Event)

Sunday, Feb. 28, 4:00 P.M.
Mozart Requiem
Nashville Symphony
Orchestra and First
Presbyterian Church
Sanctuary Choir
Raphael Bundage, Director

Sunday, Mar. 6, 12:20 P.M.
Holy Sonnets of John Donne
by Benjamin Britten
Greg Thomas, tenor
Nicholas Bergin, piano

Friday, Mar. 25, 7:00 P.M.
Tenebrae:
A Service of Shadows
First Presbyterian Church
Sanctuary Choir

Sunday, Apr. 10, 12:20 P.M.
Old American Songs
by Aaron Copland
Derek Meler, tenor
Nicholas Bergin, piano

Sunday, Apr. 24, 3:00 P.M.
Nashville Chamber Singers
Spring Concert
Angela Tipps, director

In the Left with Virginia Rubin

by Nick Bergin

On Wednesday, September 2, I had the opportunity to speak with Virginia Rubin about her involvement with the choir at FPC. Virginia has sung with the Sanctuary Choir for 25 years, and she has also contributed significantly to the children's choir program, serving as an accompanist. Enjoy this opportunity to learn more about a very dear choir member!

NB: How long have you been singing?

Virginia: I can remember singing as a little girl, about age 4, in the Methodist church in Alexandria, Louisiana. Some of the earliest songs I remember singing are "The Church in the Wildwood" and "Jesus Loves Me."

NB: What brought you to singing and who has influenced you?

Virginia: The first person who influenced me was Sylvia Thomas at St. John's Methodist Church, Memphis, who led the Junior Choir. I was allowed to sing the second verse of "Jesus Calls Us" as a solo. Junior Choir was my first real choir.

When I was in college, I had a friend who taught me a bit of how to play the organ. He was at Blacknall Memorial Presbyterian Church, near the Duke campus in Durham. I sang in his choir at the church, and we did the Fauré Requiem — my first major work. He put a little orchestra together. My next big work was the Verdi Requiem at Brevard Music Camp, where I was a counselor. It was a great experience — it made me sing all summer long. When I went back to Blacknall as a senior in college, they could tell the difference in my voice.

My next experience in life was being in the Peace Corps in the Philippines, where I learned to play the guitar and sang duets in Ilocano — a language that is spoken in the northern Philippines. Next I ended up moving to Franklin after I got married, and I went to First Presbyterian Church, Franklin. At one point Tom Warren (our choir director) decided he lacked good singers and gave some of us singing lessons to help improve the choral sound. I was also the accompanist for the Junior Choir when they had their special programs.

I moved to First Church, Nashville, in 1990. Sally Burch (with whom I worked) invited me there. I came, I liked it, and I've been there ever since. Pam Schneller, Carolyn Naumann, and Bekah Caruso influenced me at FPC, as did accompanying the Genesis Singers, which I did for over 10 years. Raphael continues to teach me so much about music and singing. Every choir practice is a learning experience.

NB: What is your favorite anthem? Your favorite hymn?

Virginia: When I was in high school, I was in the glee club, which I also accompanied. I went to a private school in Memphis, and every year at commencement (which was held at Idlewild Presbyterian Church) we sang "How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place." I also like "God So Loved the World" by John Stainer. Two of my favorite hymns are "Come, Christians, Join to Sing" and "For the Beauty of the Earth."

NB: What is your most memorable experience of singing in the choir at First Pres?

Virginia: I have to say — every time we took a choir trip, that those are certainly my favorite. The last church where we sang in Ireland in 2014, this lady started talking to me about how much she enjoyed the program. It turns out she was a nun, and she raved about how wonderful the program was. That meant a lot to me. I also always enjoy singing the major works we do each year.

NB: How does singing relate to your spiritual life?

Virginia: I like to listen to the scripture reading on Sunday, and many times it's our songs that we sing. I like to reflect on the tunes of the songs as we're reading the scriptures.



Of Note



Choir Recording

Early this fall, the Sanctuary Choir, directed by Raphael Bundage and accompanied by Nicholas Bergin, recorded a number of well-loved hymns, all of which will be released on a CD in the coming months. The recording also features three organ pieces by J.S. Bach. Once it is released, the disc will be available in the FPC bookstore. Stay tuned for further details!



Nate Strasser Concert

Jazz pianist Nate Strasser kicked off this year's 12:20 concert series on September 27, with a program of music by Duke Ellington. Nate recently returned to Nashville after completing studies in film scoring at the

University of Southern California. What a privilege to welcome him to First Pres, and what fun to start the year's concert series on such a light-hearted note!

Nicholas Bergin at St. Patrick's Cathedral

On Sunday, November 22, Nicholas Bergin performed a 30-minute organ recital at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City as part of the Cathedral's Kilgen Organ Recital Series. Nick performed works by Felix Mendelssohn, Jean Langlais, and Louis Vierne and had a grand time making music in an inspiring space.



MBA Choir Concert

Also on Sunday, November 22, the choirs of Montgomery Bell Academy and Harpeth Hall performed a concert in the FPC Sanctuary to a packed house. This concert is quickly becoming an annual tradition at FPC. Many thanks to Matt Smyth and Nancy Turner, who directed the choirs, and hearty congratulations to these young singers for singing so beautifully!



Nashville Chamber Singers Christmas Concert

The Nashville Chamber Singers, led by Angela Tippis, performed their 20th anniversary concert on Saturday, December 5. To celebrate this milestone, they sang a number of favorite works from years past, including the first work they ever performed. Our own Daphne Garey is a charter member of the choir, and she sang several beautiful solos during the concert.

Glory to God in the Highest

Our annual Christmas concert, "Glory to God in the Highest," took place on Sunday, December 13, and featured the Sanctuary Choir and a professional chamber orchestra, all conducted by Raphael Bundage, and the Psalmody Youth Choir, conducted by Carol McClure. The program included works by Bach, Handel and Vivaldi, as well as carol arrangements by Sir David Willcocks and a youth choir piece by Richard Shephard.