

2015- 2016 Handbook

Formation for lifelong praise of God



Archdiocesan Youth Choir

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St. Cecilia Institute for Sacred Liturgy, Music and the Arts

STAFF:

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Mrs. Karen Johnson, Director of Archdiocesan Youth Choir

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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THE CHOIR OF THE BAPTIZED:

Christ is always present in his Church...in the assembly of the baptized, when it prays and sings. Learning to sing in the liturgy is a lifelong journey that ends in our heavenly destiny—a place among the angels and saints, singing forever before the throne of God.

DIFFERENT GIFTS, THE SAME SPIRIT:

The choir is the joyful attendant of the People of God along its pilgrim way, and a sign of its heavenly home. Some members of the community, through a discernment of gifts, are called forth to share particular musical talents in choirs that lead and sing on behalf of the assembled Church. Children, youth and adults are formed for this ministry. They are called into service of the Mother Church, cultivating its art, preparing for its worship, and committing to its discipline of liturgical prayer.

MISSION:

The mission of the choir is *formation for lifelong praise of God* through sacred, liturgical choral music with its purpose to sing throughout the Archdiocese and in its Mother Church, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, specifically:

- To advance the ministry of liturgical children's choirs.
- To complement the children's school and parish musical experiences.
- To serve the Archdiocese of Omaha as ambassadors of the Archbishop.

EVENING PRAYER:

Besides regular participation in the Sunday Eucharist, the choir will participate in the singing of some form of Liturgy of the Hours, the daily prayer of the Church, within the rehearsal.

PARTICIPANTS:

The AYC, **Archdiocesan Youth Choir**, is open to Catholic children in 4th-8th grades, high school treble voices, and 3rd graders provisionally, through the urban deaneries of the Archdiocese.

The Magnificat Treble Choir will be offered to choristers with intermediate and or advanced musicianship. This select group will sometimes perform separately and will be considered leaders within the AYC. Please feel free to encourage children to join. A copy of the recruitment materials is included. Please contact the Director if you need more copies or to contact potential choristers.

SCHEDULE:

Rehearsals are Wednesdays from 4:30- 6:00 p.m. mid-August through May. Please see the calendar for all rehearsals, liturgies, and performances. A choir tour at the end of the year is planned.

SELECTION/ AUDITION PROCESS:

Participation in the AYC is by audition. The child will be tested for basic range, vocal aptitude and reading, and may sing a hymn (such as "Joyful, Joyful") or a familiar song if desired. Please contact the Director for further information. Choristers may be added to the choir at any time during the year at the discretion of the staff. If you have been in ACC or Magnificat Treble Choir previously, an audition may be requested only for the purpose of testing for vocal changes.

Auditions will be held from 9AM-Noon on the following dates:

Saturday, July 18, 2015

Saturday, August 1, 2015

Saturday, August 15, 2015

Auditions may be scheduled at other times if necessary. Please contact a director.

JOINING PERIODS:

Throughout the year, joining periods will be announced, during which new members may join the choir at a single time. On the day of the joining period there will be a parent meeting in the Monsignor Graham Building, Room 205, or other posted location. The first of these joining periods will be in October.

FEES AND METHOD OF PAYMENT:

Choristers pay a \$20.00 monthly fee from August through May. Auto-withdrawal forms for monthly payment will be made available, if desired. Choristers not using the auto-withdrawal will be invoiced twice a year, November 1st and April 1st. Payment is due 20 days after the date of the invoice. Late payments will be assessed a \$25.00 fee. A limited number of scholarships are available.

COMMITMENT AND ATTENDANCE:

The choir season is a year-long commitment, August through May. Choir members are expected to attend all scheduled rehearsals, liturgies and performances, and are expected to be on time. In the event that a member must be absent or more than five minutes late, the parent

or guardian should leave a voice message on the AYC voicemail (402.553.5524 EXT. 6), or send a message to the Director. A written excuse will be accepted, provided that it is written by the parent or guardian. Forms for this purpose are included in this packet and are also available in the choir room before and after rehearsals. This is to ensure the safety of a child who is missing from rehearsal.

A total of three unexcused absences will result in dismissal from the choir. If a student has missed a significant number of rehearsals or events due to excused absences, membership will be reviewed by the Directors.

Excused Absences: **Family emergency, includes illness or death**
Unexcused Absences: **Any regularly scheduled conflicting activity**

REHEARSAL PROCEDURES:

Supervision for the choristers is available beginning at 4:15 p.m. in the Choir Room at the St. Cecilia Institute. If your child should need to arrive before 4:15 p.m., they should remain seated in the reception area with the door greeter until 4:15 p.m. We cannot provide supervision for siblings or other children before, during, or after rehearsals. We also ask that children be picked up promptly after rehearsal, no later than 6:15 p.m., as the staff are engaged in other rehearsals which follow the AYC rehearsal. Choristers should wait in the reception area and indoors until parents arrive to pick them up. Cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used during rehearsal.

DUAL BOOKING OF MINISTRIES:

In the event that a chorister is scheduled for another ministry (e.g. altar services) at the same liturgy the choir is singing, they will be expected to trade with another in order to sing. This is because of the extended and specific nature of the training necessary to fulfill one's duty in the choir. Please look at server schedules far in advance to avoid conflicts.

DRESS CODE:

The choir members will wear vestments for liturgies and other special events at St. Cecilia Cathedral. For liturgies and events at other sites, choir members will be informed of attire, which may consist of black pants or skirts and white tops. Members should dress for liturgies and other appearances as if they were attending an important event. Shirts and sweaters should not show above the collar of the choir robe. Students should wear dark shoes with the vestments. Try to refrain from wearing blue jeans and tennis shoes. For weekly rehearsals, members may wear casual attire and are not required to wear school uniforms.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

The AYC will follow Saint Cecilia Grade School's policy on early dismissal for inclement winter weather. If school is canceled or dismissed due to snow, ice or extreme cold conditions, choir rehearsal will be cancelled.

If school is dismissed due to heat conditions (85 degrees by noon), the choir will meet as scheduled. Please plan accordingly.

PARENT PARTICIPATION:

Parents are needed to help the children vest and with supervision at rehearsals and liturgies. Please contact Mrs. Johnson if you are able to do this. All volunteers must complete Safe Environment Training before participating. Please contact Krystal Peteler (kapeteler@archomaha.org) at 402.553.5524 EXT. 1 to register or with questions about the training program.

ACCESS TO THE INSTITUTE:

Wednesday Rehearsals: Access to the St. Cecilia Institute is available using the Burt Street door on Wednesdays from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Please enter the code 7682 followed by the * sign to unlock the door. A door greeter is present at the main entrance and this door should be unlocked for all rehearsals.

Sunday Liturgies: Please use the Burt Street entrance and use the code 3865 followed by the * sign to gain access. There will not be a door greeter at the main entrance and this is the only way choristers may can access to vest and warm-up.

PARENT MODELING:

Your child's participation in choir is intended as formation not only when they sing as a choir, but also as part of their broader spiritual formation. It is important that when they attend liturgy, they participate using the skills they have learned in choir. Children also can teach adults—ask them to share with you what they have learned. Children also are very aware of what adults value based on observing their actions. Your own efforts at full, conscious, active participation in liturgy will serve as a model and reinforcement of the importance of Liturgy in your family's life and contribute to the worship of the whole Church. Thank you for your support of your child's ministry, musical formation and spiritual development. Please keep the mission and activities of the Archdiocesan Youth Choir in your prayers, as we are guided by the intercession of Saint Cecilia, patroness of Musicians. Saint Cecilia, pray for us!