

# 2016- 2017 Handbook

*Formation for lifelong praise of God*



## Archdiocesan Youth Choir

## **Archdiocesan Youth Choir**

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

### **STAFF:**

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Karen Johnson, Director of Archdiocesan Youth Choir  
Katherine Turner, Assistant Director AYC

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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 Archdiocesan Youth Choir (AYC)** , is open to boys and girls (treble voices) in 4<sup>th</sup> Grade through High School, through the urban deaneries of the Archdiocese. Within the AYC, **The Nova Choir** is the training choir of the group. **The Magnificat Treble Choir (MTC)** 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 students to join, and contact the Director for more copies of recruitment materials.

## **CHORAL PERFORMANCE:**

The choir will sing about twice a month at liturgies at St. Cecilia Cathedral and in other parishes, and at additional Archdiocesan and community events.

## **SCHEDULE:**

Overlapping rehearsals of the two groups are Wednesdays, from **4:00 – 5:30 p.m. for Nova Choir**, and **4:30- 6:00 p.m. for MTC**, mid-August through May. Please see the schedule for all rehearsals, liturgies, and performances. Parents are also notified by email before every event. 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 will be asked to sing a hymn (such as “Joyful, Joyful”) or another familiar song. 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. Students who have been in AYC previously may also be requested to audition again each fall, for the purpose of testing for vocal changes.

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

Saturday, July 23, 30

Saturday, August 6, 13, 20

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

## **JOINING PERIODS:**

Rehearsals will begin Wednesday, August 24, 2016, and continue through May 24, 2017. Throughout the year, joining periods will be announced, during which new members may join the choir at a single time. The first of these joining periods will be in October.

## **FEES AND METHOD OF PAYMENT:**

Choristers pay a \$20.00 monthly tuition 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 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>. 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, from mid-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 email the director at [kejohnson@archomaha.org](mailto:kejohnson@archomaha.org), or leave a voice message on the AYC voicemail (402.553.5524 EXT. 4.) A written excuse will be accepted, provided that it is written by the parent or guardian. Forms for absences known in advance are provided at registration, 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 may 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, such as car trouble, illness or death

**Unexcused Absences:** Regularly scheduled conflicting activities or frivolous reasons  
(e.g. a birthday party or sleep-over)

## REHEARSAL PROCEDURES:

Supervision for **Nova Choir** members is available beginning at 3:45 p.m. in the Room 201 at the St. Cecilia Institute. Children who need to arrive before 3:45 p.m. should remain seated in the reception area with the door greeter until 3:45 p.m. Rehearsals will begin **ON TIME** at **4:00**. Members of the **Magnificat Treble Choir** should arrive between 4:15 – 4:30, wait in the reception area or Room 208, and join the **Boys and Girls** in the Choir Room **PROMPTLY at 4:30**. We cannot provide supervision for non-choir siblings or other children before, during, or after rehearsals. We also ask that children be picked up promptly after rehearsal, no later than 5:45 for **Nova Choir** or 6:15 for **MTC**. Choristers should wait in the reception area indoors until parents arrive to pick them up. Cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used during rehearsals.

## 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, **he/she 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 and other locations. Shirts and sweaters should not show above the collar of the choir robe. Students should wear dark shoes. Try to refrain from wearing sport shoes, if possible. For weekly rehearsals, members may wear casual attire or 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.

**PARENT PARTICIPATION:**

Parents are needed to help the children vest, and with supervision before, during and after rehearsals and liturgies. The director will ask you how you are able to help. All volunteers must complete Safe Environment Training before participating. Please contact Krystal Peteler ([kapeteler@archomaha.org](mailto:kapeteler@archomaha.org)) at 402.553.5524 EXT. 1 to register or with questions about the training program or go directly to the Archdiocesan of Omaha website. The \$10 fee for training will be reimbursed by the St. Cecilia Institute.

**ACCESS TO THE INSTITUTE:**

Access to the St. Cecilia Institute is available using the Webster Street door on Wednesdays until 4:00. Parents will be given a code to unlock the door after that time. A door greeter will be present on Wednesdays and Sundays.

**PARENT MODELING:**

Your children'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!