

## **Choral program update from the Director of Music**

This coming week marks the start of a new choir year at the Cathedral and I and my colleagues couldn't be more excited! All summer a lot of work has been going on behind the scenes laying the groundwork for a return to more normal patterns for our musicians and choristers. Already, the 21-member strong Girls' Choir has had their summer camp; three days full of singing, games, vocal coaching and a field trip. A schedule of rehearsals, liturgical duties and special performances has been conceived and mapped out. New singers have been hired (more on that below). And the music library has been completely over-hauled and re-catalogued. To say nothing of the meetings, consultations and policy reviews ongoing almost constantly since spring!

Beginning this Thursday, then, we move optimistically into a new season holding our first in-person rehearsals in over a year. Next Sunday the first choral service of the term will be sung. Over the course of the next four months we aim to serve the Cathedral and the Diocese with choral eucharists, evensongs, special holiday concerts, a solemn requiem and carol services. Most of these offerings will be open to the public. Some we expect will be online only. All of it will be undertaken in a careful, measured way abiding by the best advice of health and arts professionals around the world as well as clergy leadership here at home.

As we steadily build back to our full complement of boys, girls, women and men, much of the in-person singing will be done by small ensembles of girls or men and SATB quartets/octets with occasional opportunities to deploy the full forces. A key piece in this transitional phase has been the addition of two Lady Clerks to our team: professional sopranos who have been engaged to sing alongside our alto, tenor and bass Lay Clerks. I am delighted to introduce Shannon Mercer and Wanda Procyshyn as the first incumbents! Both names and voices will be well-known to Ottawa audiences and both come to us with decades of international experience and acclaim as solo and choral artists. Equally, they are both committed pedagogues with a passion for sharing their knowledge and experience with young singers. Together with Gary Dahl and the other Lay Clerks, our boy and girl choristers now have the opportunity to be mentored and taught by some of this country's top singers. You have a chance to see and hear from each of these women elsewhere in the newsletter.

With a positive vision, renewed chorister and parent communities, and an abiding faith the Cathedral's Music Ministry is ready to embrace its mission to serve and support the Church, to minister to young people and to reach out to all through song.

James Calkin