

Welcome to the Oconomowoc Community Choir

We're thrilled to have you singing with us whether this is your first season with the choir or one in many. The goal of our choir is not only to reach out to the Lake Country community through song but to enjoy one another's company and have fun. We hope you'll be a part of our ongoing mission for many years to come.

This handbook was designed to answer your questions and help you make the most of your choir experience. If you need more information, let us know! Our board members welcome your feedback at any time.

Frequently Asked Questions

Let's start by answering some questions that new choir members often have.

What qualifications do I need to join the choir?

If you love to sing, have the desire to sing as part of a group with blended voice, and are willing to work to learn your part--you qualify! The ability to read music isn't absolutely essential, but an understanding of the basics certainly helps.

Do I have to live in Oconomowoc?

Nope! We have members from all over Lake Country and beyond. For any concert session in which you participate, all we ask is that you be willing and able to commit to attending rehearsals regularly.

Are there any age limitations?

New members should be high school age or older. We have all age groups represented in our choir, from teens to retired seniors.

What does it cost?

Members pay dues for each session they attend. The dues for the Christmas session are \$10. Dues for the Spring and Summer sessions are \$15 each. There is also a \$15 deposit for your music folder payable at the start of each session. The deposit is refundable at the end of the session, or you may choose to donate it to the choir to help us fund future activities. (You'll receive a receipt for your donation for tax purposes.)

What do my dues and other donations pay for?

They fund things like music purchases, rehearsal space rental (when required), and help pay for the professionals on whom we rely such as our director and accompanist. Additional donations contribute to the OCC Scholarship Program to award scholarships to promising young musical students.

Besides showing up and singing, what else will I be doing to help the choir?

Part of the choir's mission is to provide scholarships for area young people pursuing a career in music. During our summer session, we begin asking friends, neighbors, and area businesses for donations. As a member, you play a role! We'll ask for your assistance in getting the word out about our program and securing donations.

Members are also given packs of concert tickets to sell whenever we hold a paid concert event. We ask that each member do his or her best to sell their pack of 10 tickets (and more, if you can!) to friends, neighbors and relatives. These things contribute to the choir's growth, which every single member is a part of.

What about concert attire?

For our more formal concerts we generally wear black, which means black full-length skirts, dresses or slacks for the women (no sequins or sparkles) and black slacks and long-sleeve dress shirts for the men. For special occasions, we plan our dress accordingly but never require anything that isn't a staple of the average person's wardrobe.

Is attendance at rehearsals required?

Absolutely. Even the most skilled musicians need to rehearse with their director and group in order to handle the music proficiently and cohesively. We take attendance at each rehearsal. Illnesses and other circumstances arise, of course, but a member missing three rehearsals may be asked to step down from the concert for that session.

How often does the choir rehearse?

We practice once weekly for about 10 to 12 weeks preceding each concert. Our membership coordinator will contact you (by email, phone or postal mail) to provide you with all the necessary details before each session starts. Rehearsals are on Monday nights from 7 - 8:45 p.m. We occasionally hold make-up or additional rehearsals if needed. We'll keep you informed if that's the case.

What about bad weather?

We'll cancel rehearsals if the weather or driving conditions are too hazardous. Please make sure you have current contact information on file with our membership coordinator so we can contact you if rehearsal is cancelled. We'll also post cancellations on our website at

www.oconomowoccommunitychoir.org.

Who can I contact if I need information or have a suggestion or problem?

Any OCC board member would be happy to help you or listen to what you have to say. Our Membership Coordinator can help, or direct you to someone who can. Here's how to contact her:

Membership Coordinator - Cheryl Miller (cjmillr@yahoo.com)

Phone: (262) 965- 2775

Rehearsal Locations

During the school year:

Oconomowoc High School Music Room
(East side of the building closest to the hospital. Door #11)
641 East Forest Street
Oconomowoc

Directions to Oconomowoc High School - [MAP LINK](#)

From Hwy 67 (Summit Avenue) - Turn WEST onto East Forest Street near Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital. Turn LEFT onto Campus Drive and keep to the left to proceed to the east parking lot. The music room door is numbered: Door 11.

Summer only:

First Congregational United Church of Christ
815 South Concord Road
Oconomowoc

Directions to First Congregational UCC - [MAP LINK](#)

From Hwy 67 (Summit Avenue) or Hwy 16 (Wisconsin Avenue) - Turn SOUTH onto South Concord Road. The road branches and curves in several locations--keep to the right. The church driveway is on the left, and the church itself is set back from the road on a hill. Follow the driveway to the right and park in the lower lot. Inside the building, use the elevator or climb the stairs to the upper level. Rehearsals are held in the church worship space.

Rehearsal Etiquette

We believe in the importance of having fun! Your part in making choir rehearsal an enjoyable experience for everyone is having the courtesy to listen to the director (even if it's not your section being

rehearsed) and keeping chatter to a minimum so that other members can hear and receive directions. We'll allow for socializing at a special time during rehearsal, which brings us to...

Socializing

Friendships are forged through participating in the OCC! Part of our mission is not only to enjoy singing, but to enjoy one another's company. At each rehearsal, we take a 10 minute break to stretch our legs, unwind and chat. Beverages and snacks are provided thanks to the efforts of our Hospitality Coordinator. We'll provide a sign-up sheet for treats at rehearsal if you'd like to bring something.

The choir also gets together at the Oconomowoc Culvers on Summit Avenue (Hwy 67) after the first rehearsal of each month. Come join us for conversation and, if you're so inclined, calories!

If you have any questions about social activities, bringing treats or anything else related to hospitality, just talk to our Hospitality Coordinator: Sue Malsack - (sudsysusie@att.net)

Oconomowoc Community Choir History

Sherman Leatherberry came up with the idea to form a community choir over 20 years ago. 75 people showed up for the first rehearsal to have fun singing! Sherman, Rod Rahn and Anne Stolz served as choir co-directors at the start. (They alternated directing over the years.) Many of the founding members were from Oconomowoc, and the name Oconomowoc Community Chorus (later changed to Choir) stuck. Despite the name, the choir is not sponsored by the city, nor is membership limited to Oconomowoc residents (although rehearsals are held in Oconomowoc.)

Rod Rahn passed away and in 1996 his family made an endowment to the choir for scholarship purposes. That necessitated the formation of a formal non-profit corporation. On October 1996 the choir became incorporated as a not-for-profit non-stock organization in Wisconsin. It is organized exclusively as a charitable and educational body according to IRS Section 501(c)(3) to foster an appreciation of music through performances and sponsoring music scholarships.

Anne Stolz has stepped down from our podium so that she could have more family time, but she still sings with the choir. We are honored to have Sherman Leatherberry serving as the choir's director and Arlys Sobel as our Associate Director. And, most of all, we're honored to have YOU with us to continue weaving the song of Main Street America's community choruses and choirs.

Scholarships

Part of the choir's mission is to award scholarships to area students. We raise funds during our summer season. Each year, one of the highlights of our summer concert is performances by our young

scholarship winners. It's a delight to be able to award them money to further their pursuit of a musical education.

We encourage, and deeply appreciate, our members' help in acquiring donations. If you know of a business or individual you feel might be interested in donating to this worthy program, our Donation Coordinator would be happy to provide you with an informational brochure to hand out. Donors are always recognized in our summer concert program and given certificates expressing our gratitude for their contribution (not to mention a receipt for tax purposes.) Please feel free to contact Anne Dobratz at rehearsal or email annedobratz@sbcglobal.net.