



Choir Handbook 2023-2024

It's Gonna Be A Great Year!

Chalice Choir is a treasured community within Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, with a reputation for excellence going back many years. We are a non-auditioned, mixed choir of about 40 voices, serving BUF and the wider area. We sing inspirational classical and contemporary songs to change the world. We sing for the sheer joy of it, for spiritual fulfillment, to serve the community, and to advocate for social justice and environmental sustainability. Sometimes, we achieve all of that at once!

Singers Wanted

We encourage singers from within and outside of BUF to come try us out at any time, and we want everyone to feel welcome! No previous choral experience is necessary and music reading ability is not required, but we do continually hone our skills in order to perform the most rewarding music and to keep the experience engaging for everyone!

The Welcoming Choir Committee

Our committee helps plan and operate the choir program, welcomes newcomers and assists with any concerns. Feel free to contact any of us about anything at all. We want to hear from you!

Elie Friedlob	eliana.steele@gmail.com	(360) 510-0843
Carol Smith	smithcaroldavid@gmail.com	(360) 592-5720
Lawrence Allen	lawrencewallen@aol.com	(309) 269-4637
Carl Nyblade	carllynblade@hotmail.com	(360) 739-4847
Pete Olson	peterdonne@yahoo.com	(360) 391-0936
Cindy Pfeiffer-Hoyt	cpfeifferhoyt@gmail.com	(360) 707-8413
Jane Ronca-Washburn	janesings72@gmail.com	(480) 254-1642
Kjerstie Nelson	kjerstienelson_7@msn.com	(360) 920-7613

Choral Skill Building and Parts Learning

We improve our music reading and performing skills with informal vocal training included in every rehearsal, sectionals, music reading buddies, and on-line rehearsal tracks. We want to feel comfortable and competent in singing and learning together, even as complete beginners, to feel loved and appreciated, and to feel confident and inspired to share whatever abilities we've got.

Saturday sectionals for learning the parts are occasionally offered by our volunteer choral coach *extraordinaire* RuthAnn Hanlin, as posted and announced at choir rehearsals.

<http://bufchoir.org/> - See this online practice site created by Al Heezen, with sing-along tracks for learning separate parts

Rehearsal and Performance Calendar

We will rehearse from 6:45-8pm every Wednesday, September 6 through June 7, except *there will be no choir rehearsals on Nov 22 (Thanksgiving), Dec 27 (Christmas) Jan 3 (New Years) or April 3 (Spring Break).*

We will perform for a Sunday morning service about once a month and for several special events or trips throughout the year. See our [Choir Calendar 23-24](#) for songs and dates.

Rehearsal and Attendance Expectations

Please be seated with your music, pencil and both hymnbooks by 6:45pm each Wednesday, ready to sing.

If you'll be late or will miss a rehearsal or performance, please inform Kevin *in advance* by email kevin@buf.org or text 406-858-0142. The simplest message will do, please don't give a reason. Kevin's response will be "Got it, thanks!"

This is for courtesy and planning purposes. Our choir is powerful and rewarding because we can rely on each other.

Example of courtesy email or text:	Singer's message to Kevin	<i>Sorry, I won't be at rehearsal on (date)</i>
	Kevin's answer	<i>Got it, thanks.</i>

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Folders

Each singer is issued a numbered folder full of songs. The folder and the songs all have the same number. When we perform, we usually put the piece for the day into a black 3-ring binder. Music may be left in the numbered slots in the choir room or taken home. New songs and information are distributed to the numbered slots throughout the year but only collected back in twice a year (December and June). Singers may be charged for lost music.

We know that plans change and you may choose to leave the choir. If this happens and you have music at home, please return it asap. If you are going to be gone for more than a month, please return your music. We will assign you a new number when you return. Please tell Kevin your plans.

Community Night Dinner (starting September 20)

In order to help people with jobs and/or families get to choir on Wednesday evenings, BUF instituted the tradition of providing dinner for the whole community at 6pm every Wednesday when there is choir. There is a requested \$5 donation per person or \$12 per family. Choir members are encouraged and expected to take turns to help cook and/or set up. There will be a sign-up sheet.

Childcare Available

BUF provides childcare at no charge during choir rehearsals starting immediately after Community Night Dinner. Let us know if you need care for your children! Contact Director of Life and Learning Genia Allen-Schmid for more info at genia@buf.org or (406) 858-0917

Pledging \$

There is no charge to participate in the BUF choral program, but all singers are expected to pledge to BUF. You don't have to be a BUF member to pledge, and the amount that you pledge is entirely up to you. If you haven't already pledged for the 2023-2024 church year, please give a pledge card to the BUF office.

Phoenix Ensemble

This auditioned SATB group sings for one Sunday service monthly and rehearses after Chalice Choir from 8:10pm-9pm. We prefer a year-long commitment and members must also be in Chalice Choir. Informal auditions will be held at 8:10pm on September 6 and 13, and thereafter as needed or requested.

Volunteers Needed to Perform Special Music

Please tell Kevin if you are interested in providing instrumental or vocal special music anytime by yourself or in a group, *a cappella* or accompanied, and especially for these Sunday mornings which are open (as of September 1)

Semester 1 Oct 29, Nov 5, 26, Dec 3, 17, 31

Semester 2 Jan 7, 28, Feb 4, 25, Mar 3, 24, Apr 7, 21, May 12, 26, June 2, 16

Performance Attire, Stoles

Chalice Choir and Phoenix Ensemble sing in clothing of their own choice, usually combining black on the bottom with varying, solid colors on top. Singers should have one all black outfit and can always default to wearing just that. Sometimes we perform with our beautiful stoles, which are checked out and back in again at each performance.

Chemical and Aroma Sensitivity

Please keep rehearsals and performances scent-free by not wearing perfumes, cologne or scented products.

How To Help The Choir Prosper

- *Make rehearsals a priority and attend as many as you can. Inform Kevin in advance by email or text if you will miss
- *Attend sectionals when they are offered if you would like help learning your parts
- *Bring people to choir rehearsal, just to check us out. Then make it so fun that they want to stay
- *Help choir librarian Ann Stevenson and her team with filing and folder work
- *Help prepare a community night dinner (large task) or sign up occasionally to set up at 5:30pm (small task)
- *Help with the sound system, stole handling, fundraisers, event and party planning, transportation, publicity
- *Help the stage crew boss with stage set up and strike
- *Make a donation (can be anonymous) toward choir expenses (buying music, hiring instrumentalists, special events)

BUF Music Staff and Volunteer Positions

Music Director	Kevin Allen-Schmid	kevin@buf.org	(406) 858-01423
Keyboard Artist I	Melanie Rieck	musicheals@comcast.net	(360) 319-3739
Keyboard Artist II	Andrea Rackl	arackl@hotmail.com	(360) 527-9449
Saturday Sectionals	RuthAnn Harlin	rah2sing@comcast.net	(360) 223-6849
Choir Librarian	Ann Stevenson	ann.v.stevenson@gmail.com	(360) 961-4468

I'm looking forward to a great year of music at BUF

Feel free to contact me at anytime. It's gonna be a great year! Kevin