

Chancel Choir 65th Anniversary Survey

1. Think back to the night you first attended Chancel Choir. What is the most impressive thing you remember from that rehearsal? Or share any impression, observation or memory.

The glorious sound of so many good singers!

I sat next to Judy Burket. We started talking and in the course of our conversation we found out that Judy's uncle and family not only lived in my hometown, but he was the doctor that delivered me! He was my doctor until I moved away to go to college!

Lost in the crowd!

I was impressed by how well organized such a large group was.

The size of the choir. Very big for a church choir.

I had not sung in a choir for years, so I was very nervous, but everyone was so warm and welcoming that it put me at ease. However, when it came time for my introduction, no one was prepared to do that. THAT was a bit awkward!

It was not an ordinary church choir! We did so much more than hymns

Singing at Powell Hall.

I really cannot recall my first night almost 50 years ago, but I consider the choir a family and my church within the MUMC church.

The depth of sound and number of people in each of the sections.

20 years ago. We were referred by the Lawrences who were members of our previous church. Also, services were held in what is now Fellowship Hall. We remember processing to the new sanctuary thru some unfinished construction, led by Pastor John Ward

All the officers and auxiliary staff were at the ready to greet all members, but especially the new folks. Sue Woolweaver was my welcome buddy.

After being in other choirs for almost 40 years I don't remember this one being much different.

I began my MUMC choir experience as a member of the sanctuary choir and admit I was a bit apprehensive the first time I attended Chancel choir rehearsal. Three altos, Mary Lou Adams,

Jean Kinnard, and Janice Benton, immediately welcomed me with kindness, a sense of belonging, and humor . . . compliments of Jean. I think of them often.

The friendliness of Betty G.

I felt very welcomed.

I remember feeling very welcome and "at home" from the very first rehearsal.

Everyone was so nice and welcoming. And Kevin made the rehearsal fun.

That first night I sat next to Connie Gnaegy who made me feel right at home and helped me enjoy the music too.

Coming from a choir of 35 the power of 85 singers impressed me. Especially the deep sound of the tenors and basses

The size and quality of the choir impressed me. Kevin made a big impression on me. And I loved the music that we sang through that night.

30+ years ago -- I knew right then I wanted to be a part of this great group of people! I was impressed with how warm and inviting members were and how much fun it was to sing with them.

I was very NEW to the choir when it moved rehearsals from Old Fellowship Hall into the BIG CHOIR ROOM. On one of the "first" nights in the new setting, a young man came in and sat on a chair behind me. He had a beautiful voice, but he mostly LISTENED. I asked him if he was thinking of joining the choir and he smiled and nodded yes. To my surprise, the following Thursday night he was introduced to all of us as our NEW choir director . . . KEVIN MCBETH!

Well, at least I did not scare him away! Bonnie Halls

We had not sung in a choir together before since we became married. Lori Burke convinced us to join choir and I think it was Kevin's first year. It was the beginning of a lot of fun, beautiful music, meeting wonderful people, and being part of a top-notch choir! So glad we joined!

My introduction by Dean Wilson. Everybody was very friendly.

A sincere welcome from so many!

I was warmly welcomed by my fellow altos and was in awe of our director and accompanist.

So glad that I came. I felt comfortable and "part of the group" right away.

How welcoming the choir was to me as a new person.

The welcoming atmosphere.

I knew so many people from singing with Chancel Choir at Carnegie and Kennedy Center, but everyone was just welcoming.

The size of the choir.

Being excited to sing with Kevin directing.

Everyone was friendly and we all fit in two rows.

The size of the group.

It was before we moved into the current sanctuary, so took me a bit to find the music room. Someone helped me, and when I got there everyone made me feel very welcome.

The energy of the choir was like a magnet. I fell in love with the choir the first night.

It was Halloween and people were wearing costumes. It was fun!

I've completely forgotten!

Everyone seemed excited to be there! There was great energy in the room!

I didn't know a soul and was shy but soon felt at ease when people started talking to me. I was amazed at the remarkable sound of all the voices singing. I had sung in choirs before but knew I had to sing in this choir because tears of joy would run down my face every Sunday whenever the choir sang!

Well, I was in the choir at St. Mark Presbyterian, and upon entering the music room at MUMC, it was like stepping from the minor leagues to the majors, it was that different.

That was in 1980 and a new member of the church. Betty Gnaegy made me feel very welcomed.

I won a raffle prize that first night, prize being lunch with Kevin. He and I decided on Mexican food and the restaurant. I went and sat at a table for at least 45 min. waiting patiently. The waiters were very solicitous of my being stood up and attended to my glass of water frequently. Turns out Kevin had a meeting sprung on him at the last minute. I still love him anyway.

I remember how friendly people were and that Sue Sturhahn took me under her wing and helped me with the music and guidelines of the choir. I felt immediately at home and so thankful to be singing in a church choir once again. This was back in 1978.

Kevin put my name in the bulletin wrong (added an E) even though he knew me. Now when I'm feisty, I'm called that name.

Actually, being there after over 10 years of wanting to join. The timing was finally right.

I struck up a conversation with Donna LaMarca. I asked her if she knew Dr. LaMarca, who was my dentist when I was a child. She told me that she was married to him.

How organized everything was! Really felt welcome. Overwhelmed by the sound of so many voices.

Just the feeling of oneness as we sang the first song.

Friendly section people.

The size of the choir and the skills of its members.

The performance of "Sing Out my Soul". No warm up, no rehearsal. Everyone just sang it from their heart!

Kevin verbalizing the extending of the choir's warm welcome to me, for I had literally walked into rehearsal that night completely spontaneously.

Kevin wasn't in rehearsal that night. It was my first time to your church, so I didn't know where to go exactly. I walked in with Sue Belval and asked her where the choir room was (old room). She was kind enough to introduce herself and said follow me. I believe we sing a song now with those words.

I guess it was the feeling of being "home", very welcoming.

I remember the enthusiasm and welcome feeling that greeted me. Good folks and good singers.

Friendliness.

I remember how welcoming the choir members were. It was when the choir was only about 30 or 40 members.

I was impressed with the number of people and how everything was organized.

I re-connected with old friends that I grew up with.

2. What has been the funniest thing you have observed during your time in the Chancel Choir?

Kevin's wit.

Kevin . . . :-)) and his jokes. He's a funny guy sometimes! Don't know.

No one thing comes to mind: just the funny little things that people say every Thursday night.

Really enjoyed all the "Kevinisms" as we celebrated his anniversary at the church. We all have heard them, but hearing them en masse was great!

The night we had rehearsal in Fellowship Hall with all the other choirs. (I'm not sure what we are rehearsing; New York trip???) However, Andy and Kevin were directing, and Kevin was wearing a brown suit, looking handsome as usual. But the back wall of the stage is brown, and his suit was brown so all I could see of Kevin when he took his turn at directing were the whites of his eyes.

Our talent shows! Not sure if there was any talent, but the shows were phenomenal.

Ted & the Peabody Ducks.

In the old sanctuary the choir could really see the communion elements served at the altar. One Sunday the grape juice ran out, the stewards found fruit punch in the kitchen, and the final communion takers had brightly colored juice with their bread.

Many -- but two are memorable: Our talent shows -- Larry Sheppard doing "Aweemaway", and the singing "Nuns" (Kevin as leader, long hair flowing) doing "My Guy".

Kevin dressing in his Sister Act costume.

Mostly witty remarks from choir members in response to Kevin's pronouncements.

I can't think of one specific thing but am convinced that we get through taxing rehearsals because of Kevin's and/or John's humorous comments.

Mike Campbell's sarcastic comments.

We are all a bunch of fun loving clowns!

The funniest thing I have observed during my time in Chancel Choir is when Kevin dressed up like Whoopi Goldberg in Sister Act for Fall Follies . . . complete with red pumps!

The swearing in of the new choir president and "queen/king" at our annual end of season (or beginning of season?) get together. Such a hoot! I'm so sorry it was discontinued.

When I picked up the wrong folder for a chancel Christmas Concert . . . and had to be very cool looking on.

I come to choir to activate all those happy endorphins from Kevin's jokes.

Kevin dressed up as a nun complete with red heels!

Christmas Eve service with Tom Brown when he thought the choir knew all the verses to "Go Tell It on the Mountain". We were processing, and the program said Verse 4: Choir sings alone. We had no music. Tom's comment: " I thought EVERYONE knew all the verses!"

Kevin imitating how we sound or creating silly images of what he hears!

The night of a choir talent show, Kevin dressed as a woman "gospel" singer and brought the "house" down.

Kevin does have a sense of humor which I'm sure is sorely tested every now and then. Nothing particular comes to mind as a specific incident.

Dave & Kathy Givens were standing for their wedding anniversary. They both have different number of years. Dave gave the right answer.

I've enjoyed the laughter at rehearsal times, but being so new, much of the humor was "over my head".

It's hard to pick one since Kevin is amusing at every practice.

Watching people rehearse in crazy costumes for the "Broadway Show".

Kevin dressing up like Whoopie in Sister Act.

Kevin mocking a particular section.

I enjoy when Gary Ford reads Kevin's best quotes.

The seat ownership . . . I am included in that too.

Sometimes the things Kevin says, aka the "Kevinisms" that people have written down over the years.

Our choir wore a white surplice over black skirts, men and women.

It's been a number of years since I've been at a Chancel rehearsal, but I'm sure the funniest thing would've had to include members of the bass section. They were quickest with the jokes when anything provided an opportunity.

The people who think they have to try to keep us all in line instead of Kevin.

I like the jokes Kevin reads to us to lighten the mood.

Kevin in high heels.

One of the funniest things I remember was a skit for Fall Follies. It was a dramatic reading of the lyrics to, "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," involving Larry Shepard and the late John Lemen. We literally laughed until we cried!

3. What has been the most important thing you have experienced as a member of Chancel Choir?

Standing on the stage at Carnegie Hall was the thrill of a lifetime.

A caring community and some good friends.

Love of its members and cooperation.

I feel the presence of the Holy Spirit when we sing a beautiful piece of music well.

Foremost, worshipping through exciting and beautiful music, sharing that with congregation and community.

Fellowship, warm fellowship, lovely fellowship! I have made some wonderful friendships among the choir members. And I do believe my singing voice has improved!

When choir members reached out to my family after my Dad died. I had been on the giving end but not the receiving end. You are never alone if you are a choir member.

Making Friends.

Understanding how our music can enhance the worship service.

The joy of singing in a large choir with the excellent direction that Kevin always shared with us.

Only one? here's three: 1. Singing with various renown composers, 2. Our trips to Carnegie Hall and Great Britain, 3. New friendships.

Sense of family and the prayers/cards during illness and loss of family members.

The chance to sing with a really great choir with really great guest conductors.

The lasting friendships and the spirit of our choir family have blessed me in so many ways. I love the fact that we're constantly learning and being challenged.

The support from numerous choir members, and specifically Larry Woolweaver, of my children as they grew up in the church.

Ministry to the church.

The most important thing I have experienced while in Chancel Choir is the superb music making alongside beautiful friends!

I love Kevin and the music he picks for us to sing and the joyous sound of over 100 people singing. It really feeds my soul. And I love the feeling of community and family. Such a blessing when times are good and when they are rough, knowing you have others who care and are celebrating/praying with you. I thank God for the opportunity to be a part of this choir.

How music helps all of us pray.

The professionalism of inspiring conducting and the privilege of singing with experienced instrumentalists.

The sense of community, family, and love that this group has and shares with each other all the time, through thick and thin!

The Chancel Choir provides me with the opportunity to praise God by lifting my voice in the gladness of song -- along with 100 of my best friends!

Meeting wonderful people with great voices.

The Chancel Choir is a very LARGE group of singers! What is unusual is the way everyone accepts everyone else. New people are greeted with warm smiles and lots of help resharing music and what and how we do things. The "caring" goes much further than Thursday night and Sunday morning. Few groups of this size can enjoy this type of environment. Much of the credit for this belongs to our CONDUCTOR . . . Kevin.

That so many people are so dedicated to bringing beautiful music to others and be part of a worship service.

Kevin's direction, not only music but all the planning for traveling. I'm sure his voice was instrumental in hiring John and upgrading the organ.

This appears to be such a dedicated group of people - true camaraderie.

I am uplifted by the amazing voices I have the privilege to sing with.

Discovering wonderful new music and new "forever" friends.

The feeling you receive being a part of this extended family. The people are wonderful.

Family.

A sense of community and a life outside of work.

Being a member of chancel choir is one of the finest experiences I have ever had . . .

The love of music and beautiful music making; the camaraderie of the group and feeling comfortable.

Keep a positive attitude and a willingness to learn something new.

The love and support during life's tough times.

The feeling of being part of a family.

The growth of my worship and relationship to God through singing his praises.

So many different music experiences and travels both national and international.

A very pronounced deepening of my faith.

Community, dedication and the constant work toward musical excellence. Years ago, there was a proposal to shorten the length of weekly rehearsal, and most of the choir agreed that we would lose something with less rehearsal time. That's a tremendous show of dedication.

Music is in my soul and this choir always uplifts my spirits whether at rehearsals or in concert. I'm very thankful for Kevin and John whose talents are amazing and for the friends I've made. I feel very blessed!