

GREATER MANASSAS CHILDREN'S CHOIR

FIND YOUR VOICE &
SING!



PARENT HANDBOOK 2026-2027

GMCC Concert Dates

Winter Concert

Sunday, December 6, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.
Manassas Baptist Church

Spring Concert

Sunday, May 2, 2027 at 3:00 p.m.
Manassas Baptist Church

Manassas Choral

Friday, May 22, 2027 at 7:30 p.m.
"Here, There, and Everywhere!" Spring Concert
Hylton Performing Arts Center

Our GMCC History

The Manassas Chorale created the Greater Manassas Children's Choir (GMCC) in Fall 2015 to give children a chance to sing and grow through music. Celebrating 10 successful years, GMCC is now entering its 12th season (2026–2027), GMCC has offered young singers in Kindergarten through 8th grade the opportunity to learn from and perform with professional musicians who love sharing their passion for music.

Many GMCC singers also participate in school or church choirs—our program is meant to enhance, not replace, those experiences. We're proud that some of our graduates have even gone on to join the Manassas Chorale!

Rehearsals and performances take place at Manassas Baptist Church, also home to the Manassas Chorale. We're excited to welcome you to our 2025–2026 season as we celebrate over a decade of joyful music-making!

**Manassas Baptist Church
(corner of Stonewall and Sudley Roads, across from Post Office)
8800 Sudley Road, Manassas, VA 20110**

Keep In Touch With Us

**Greater Manassas Children's Choir
P. O. Box 101
Manassas, VA 20108**

E-mail Address: gmccsings@gmail.com

**Like us on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/GMCCSings**

<https://greatermanassaschildrenschoir.org>



GMCC Committee Members

Artistic Director (Harmony Choir).....Susan Dommer
Artistic Director (Crescendo Choir)Becky Verner
Artistic Director (Melody Choir).....Nicole Golder
Accompanist (Crescendo Choir)Kimberley Hill
Accompanist (Harmony Choir).....Alexander Diaz
Accompanist (Melody Choir)Josh Garner
Director of OperationsTamara Halstead
President/Treasurer...Kathryn Moore

Additional Committee Members:

Eileen Daniels, Cathy Drummond,
Sarah Gilbert, Daisy Reynolds, and
Susie Theobald



Professional Musician Biographies

Susan Dommer, Artistic Director (Harmony Choir)

Susan Dommer is a retired Choral Director at Unity Braxton Middle School and the Music Director for the Manassas Church of the Brethren. Susan has degrees from James Madison University (BMEd) and Shenandoah University (MME) and is a National Board Certified Teacher. Professional memberships include: American Choral Directors Association (VA ACDA Summer Conference Committee Member) and National Association for Music Education (District 9 Choral Representative and District Chair). Mrs. Dommer is grateful to her GMCC singers for the opportunity to make music with them!

Becky Verner, Artistic Director (Crescendo Choir)

Rebecca (Becky) Verner has served as the Artistic Director of the Manassas Chorale since 1997. She is also Director of Music at Manassas Baptist Church, where she directs the Sanctuary Choir and Evensong Bells. Past Dean and Auditor of the Northern Virginia chapter of the American Guild of Organists and past President of the Osbourn Alumni Association, Mrs. Verner is also a member of the American Choral Directors Association and serves on a state committee for her denomination.

Kimberley Hill, Accompanist (Crescendo Choir)

Kimberley Hill, a local homeschool mom and private piano teacher, is very excited to have the opportunity to play for the Greater Manassas Children's Choir. She also plays keyboard for the worship ministry team at Manassas Baptist Church & offers freelance work as a pianist and accompanist. She has sung with the Manassas Chorale for many years. Ms. Hill enjoys composing and has had 4 choral anthems published in the last several years.

Nicole Golder, Artistic Director (Melody Choir)

Nicole Golder is a dedicated music educator with a degree in music education from George Mason University. She has 8 years of experience teaching middle school chorus and elementary general music in Prince William and Fairfax County Public Schools. Currently, Nicole is a stay-at-home mom who continues to share her passion for music by teaching at GMCC. She enjoys using creative and engaging teaching methods to inspire students to discover the joy of music and develop their musical abilities.

Joshua Garner, Accompanist (Melody Choir)

Josh Garner is a NOVA student, private music instructor, and experienced pianist and guitarist. A graduate of Osbourn High School, he has performed in numerous instrumental and vocal ensembles and continued his music studies at NOVA in piano, music theory, and chorus. Josh is also a member of the Manassas Baptist Church Sanctuary Choir and has played with Evensong Handbells for 10 years. He is passionate about teaching and performing music and is grateful to serve as an accompanist for GMCC.

Alexander Diaz, Accompanist (Harmony Choir)

Alex Diaz is a vocalist, pianist, and music educator with a background in vocal performance, composition, and musical theater. He studied at the Alabama School of Fine Arts and Bennington College and has performed extensively as both a pianist and vocalist. Since moving to the DMV in 2022, Alex has continued performing and teaching voice and piano from his Manassas studio. He also serves as Education Coordinator at the ARTfactory and is honored to work with the talented young singers of GMCC.

Who We Are

The Greater Manassas Children's Choir (GMCC) offers a fun and educational singing experience for students in Kindergarten through 8th grade (with unchanged voices). Sponsored by the Manassas Chorale, GMCC brings together singers from diverse backgrounds and is divided into three groups: Melody, Harmony, and Crescendo.

Rehearsals take place Thursdays from 6:15–7:30 p.m. (Melody ends at 7:00 p.m.) at Manassas Baptist Church, from September through May. Concerts are held in December and May. All directors and accompanists are professional musicians.

Performance Opportunities for GMCC Singers Include:

- Annual Winter & Spring Concerts at Manassas Baptist Church
- Spring Concerts with the Manassas Chorale at the Hylton Performing Arts Center
- Holiday performances at local senior living centers (Arbor Terrace and Commonwealth)
- Sunday services at Manassas Baptist Church
- Community events like National Night Out and the Veterans Day Parade in Historic Old Town Manassas
- Special appearances, such as singing at Nathan's Dairy Bar

Past Highlights:

- In April 2017, GMCC performed with the Grand Cities Children's Choir and composer Greg Gilpin in Washington, D.C.
- That same spring, GMCC singers created riverscape drawings featured in a concert slideshow.
- Empty Bowls Fundraiser at Manassas Church of the Brethren (benefiting SERVE/ NVFS)

Additional Opportunities:

- GMCC singers may audition for the **ACDA Voices United Children's Honor Chorus**, held annually in August at George Mason University.
- Graduating members may audition to join the **Manassas Chorale**.

Joining the GMCC

Voice Checks for NEW Singers:

New singers (Harmony and Crescendo only) can schedule a voice check by emailing gmccsings@gmail.com. The voice check is simple—it includes singing a short scale and “Happy Birthday.” No prior training is needed! We’re looking for kids who enjoy singing and are ready to learn.

Voice checks are offered at the start of each season segment (Fall and Spring). They are only required once for new singers. A **\$25 non-refundable registration fee** is due at the time of the voice check.

The first **three rehearsals of the season are open**—new singers are welcome to try it out before deciding to join.

Registration Fee:

Parents will receive an email with a link to register online or given a paper copy of the registration paperwork after completion of the voice check.

There is a one-time \$25 registration fee for all NEW singers. *This fee only applies the first year that your child sings with the GMCC.*

Length of Season:

The GMCC season runs from **September to June** and is a **9-month commitment**:

- **Fall Segment:** Begins after Labor Day with a **Winter Concert in December**
- **Spring Segment:** Starts in January with a **Spring Concert in May**
- The season ends with a **final performance at the Hylton Performing Arts Center** (with the Manassas Chorale) and a fun **wrap-up concert at Nathan’s Dairy Bar** in June.

Attendance at all three dress rehearsals and concerts is required, so please check your schedule before joining.



Choir Goals

- ◆ Rehearsal Skills
- ◆ Performance Skills
- ◆ Vocal Skills
- ◆ Interval and Rhythmic Reading
- ◆ Lifelong Love of Choral Music

Membership Expectations

Rehearsals:

Weekly rehearsals are held Thursdays from 6:15–7:30 p.m. at Manassas Baptist Church:

- Melody Choir: 6:15–7:00 p.m. in Room 306
- Harmony Choir: Room 305
- Crescendo Choir: Choir Room

All rooms are on the 3rd floor. Please arrive no more than 15 minutes early, and pick up promptly at the end of rehearsal. As guests of the church, we ask that families be respectful of the space and other occupants.

Sign In/Out Procedures:

Children must be signed in and out each week by a parent or approved adult. Sign-in is in their assigned room. Melody Choir ends at 7:00 p.m.; all others at 7:30 p.m. For safety, children will not be released to meet parents outside.

Rehearsal Guidelines:

- Arrive between 6:00–6:10 p.m. for check-in.
- Children should wear their name tag and bring their assigned music.
- Masks are optional.
- Tuition/payments can be given to the Director of Operations, GMCC Treasurer (if present), or placed in the labeled envelopes at sign-in. Do not give money or forms to Artistic Directors.
- Label water bottles with your child's name.
- No electronic devices unless necessary—and they must be silenced.
- No gum, candy, or food. Allergy-safe snacks may be provided on special occasions. Keep allergy info up to date.
- Use restrooms before rehearsal to limit disruptions.
- Children must be in their seats and ready to sing by 6:15 p.m.

Parent Waiting Areas:

Parents are welcome to wait at the church, but not on the 3rd floor. Please use the Welcome Center (2nd floor) or the area outside the Sanctuary.

Late Pickup:

Please pick up your child on time. Repeated pickups after 7:45 p.m. (more than 3 times) may result in a \$10 late fee.

Membership Expectations Continued

Music Selections and “Homework”:

GMCC provides music for each concert season. All music is owned by GMCC and kept in folders, which are handed out at the first rehearsal for Harmony and Crescendo choirs. Folders stay at Manassas Baptist Church and are collected after each rehearsal. If a folder is taken home by mistake, please return it the next week. After the concert, music is filed in our library.

Midway through the season, singers will receive a word booklet and access to online rehearsal tracks. Many families find car rides a great time to practice by playing the music and singing along.

Behavior:

Each child is to take responsibility for being a productive member of the GMCC. We only have a limited time each week and each month to prepare the children for the upcoming concerts. Disruptive behavior such as talking during rehearsals, texting, disrupting the teaching or the learning process - all are not acceptable.

We expect the children to be polite and kind to everyone involved in the choirs and to demonstrate good listening skills. The Artistic Directors will contact parents if a child continues to disrupt the rehearsals. Please talk to your child so he/she understands our expectations.

Child Protection Policy:

The GMCC has a Child Protection Policy in place. If you have questions about the policy or would like to receive a copy, please send an email to the Director of Operations at gmccsings@gmail.com.

Keeping Your Contact Information Current:

We update parent and emergency contact info at the start of each season. This information is kept in each rehearsal room in case of an emergency. If your phone number or email changes during the year, please notify us at gmccsings@gmail.com.

Communication:

Email is our main way to communicate with families. Weekly newsletters, reminders, and tuition info are sent via email. Be sure to notify us of any email changes during the year.

Those families with concerns/questions about their singer(s), **including special needs and considerations**, should speak directly with the choir leader.

Inclement Weather Policy:

GMCC follows Prince William County Public Schools for weather and emergency closings. If conditions improve, we may still rehearse with approval. Please check your email in the afternoon for updates.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is important for your child's success in the choir. **Maintaining regular attendance is a membership responsibility.** Each rehearsal helps prepare for our concerts, so we ask that families make every effort to attend each week. Attendance is taken at every rehearsal and marked as present, absent, sick, or tardy.

Concert Season & Absence Limits:

The season is split into two segments—Fall/Winter (Sept–Dec) and Spring (Jan–May).

- Each segment allows **up to 2 absences**
- **3 tardies = 1 absence**
- If your child exceeds the limit, they may be asked to sing and demonstrate choreography for the Artistic Director before being allowed to perform in the concert

Sick Policy:

If your child is sick, **please email gmccsings@gmail.com** before rehearsal.

- Do **not** bring your child if they stayed home from school or have been sick that day
- Children must be free of fever, vomiting, and on antibiotics (if prescribed) for at least **24 hours** before returning to rehearsal

Making Up Missed Rehearsals:

If your child misses a rehearsal, they should practice at home using the word booklet and online rehearsal tracks.

Dress Rehearsals & Concerts:

Attendance at **all dress rehearsals and concerts is mandatory** unless pre-approved by the Artistic Director. Only serious situations like illness or family emergencies are considered excused.

- **Dress rehearsal uniforms are not required**
- Please wear comfortable clothes and shoes

Thank you for helping us maintain a strong and successful choir experience!

Tuition for 2026-2027 Concert Season

Annual Tuition:

- \$270 per child (cash/check discount), \$288 per child (credit/debit card)
- **Save \$20 per child** by pre-paying by the due date
- **Sibling discounts** available (see form on website)

GMCC relies on tuition to help fund music, supplies, staff, and facility costs. When you enroll and sign the payment agreement, you are committing to the full tuition—whether paid all at once or in installments (monthly, quarterly, or annually).

Please review the concert and dress rehearsal schedule before registering. All three concerts and dress rehearsals are **mandatory**.

Leaving Mid-Season:

If you need to withdraw due to unforeseen circumstances, please contact the Director of Operations as soon as possible at gmccsings@gmail.com. If you're facing financial hardship, let us know—we're happy to work with you with available scholarship opportunities.

Payment Methods:

- Cash, check (payable to GMCC with singer name in memo line), or credit/debit card
- Give payments to the Director of Operations or GMCC Treasurer at rehearsal
- **Do not give payments to the Artistic Directors**
- Online payments accepted on our website

Late Fees:

- A 1-week grace period applies to most payments
- A **\$10 late fee** is added on **Day 8** if payment is missed
- The grace period does **not** apply to the **first payment**
- Returned checks will incur a **\$12 bank fee + \$10 late fee**

Please stay up to date with the payment schedule provided at registration. Thank you for your support!

Tuition for 2026-2027 Concert Season Continued

Additional Financial Obligations:

Additional charges include a one-time registration fee for new singers (\$25), the cost to purchase a choir polo shirt for performances (\$20-\$30), and the cost of concert tickets for your family to enjoy the Manassas Chorale/GMCC performance at the Hylton Performing Arts Center in May 2026 (tickets purchased separately through the Hylton Performing Arts Center Box Office—all children are free).

Scholarships:

Scholarship funds are available to members who may be in need of financial assistance. To apply for these funds, please speak to the Director of Operations.

Other Financial Policies:

All outstanding balances from a prior concert season must be paid in full in order to be eligible to continue into the new concert season. Families joining the program mid-year for the Spring segment will be offered a pro-rated tuition.

GMCC Uniform Appearance at Concert Performances

- **Top:** GMCC polo shirt (tucked in)
- **Bottoms:** Black dress pants or black skirts (between knee and ankle length). If wearing a skirt, wear black tights and black shoes. If pants have belt loops, wear a black belt. **No jeans allowed.**
- **Shoes:** Black, closed-toe shoes. Girls may wear black flats or heels (1" to 1½")
- **Socks:** Black socks; girls may wear black tights.

Accessories:

- No dangly earrings or necklaces
- No large headbands or bows

Appearance:

- Clean and neat. Natural makeup only. No bright lipstick.

Fragrance: No perfume, cologne, or scented lotions – some singers have allergies or asthma.

Note: Each new singer receives a free GMCC t-shirt. Replacement shirts can be purchased if needed.



GMCC Choir Shirts:

Each singer is required to purchase a GMCC polo shirt for performances—this is part of being a GMCC member.

- **Shirt details:** Royal blue collared polo with gold stitching (GMCC logo and music notes)
- **For performances only** – not for everyday wear
- **Matches Manassas Chorale shirts** for joint events (same style, different logo)
- Shirts are ordered by the Director of Operations before each concert
- Sample sizes are available to help choose the right fit
- **Cost:** \$20–\$30 (based on vendor pricing); payment is due at the time of order
- Shirts can be reused each year as long as they still fit
- Occasionally, discounted used shirts may be available

Interested in Getting Involved in the GMCC?



Become a Patron of the GMCC

(Consider making a tax deductible donation to our non-profit organization.)



Become a Member of our GMCC Committee

(Most GMCC Committee members are part of the Manassas Chorale, but parents are always welcome and encouraged to join us.)



Help Spread the Word about the GMCC

(We advertise for upcoming events and solicit new members via flyers and posters displayed at local businesses; volunteer to assist with advertisements in local publications and/or social media websites.)



Hand out Programs at Performances, Greet Guests and Answer Questions



Promote the GMCC by Seeking Sponsors and/or Patrons, as well as New Members for the Melody, Harmony and Crescendo Choirs



There is Something for Everyone!

Choir Keys for Success

- ◇ Use correct posture with hands by side
- ◇ Stay in your space
- ◇ Sing and listen appropriately
- ◇ Pronounce words clearly
- ◇ Stay focused
- ◇ Follow the Director
- ◇ Do your best
- ◇ Memorize, think, apply
- ◇ Practice at home
- ◇ Enjoy yourself and have fun

