



Manassas Chorale 2025-2026 Member Handbook

IMPORTANT NOTE

All policies are in effect until further notice, and may change pursuant to federal, state, and local guidelines, or by Board decision.

Please stay informed via email, our website, and Facebook for the most up to date information.



Manassas Chorale

2025-2026

Member Handbook

Major Concert Dates

Fall	Saturday, October 11, 2025 at 7:30 PM <i>From Broadway with Love</i>
Williamsburg	Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 8:00 PM <i>Candlelight Concert at Bruton Parish</i>
Winter	Saturday, December 13, 2025 at 7:30 PM <i>Merry and Bright</i>
Voices United	Saturday, March 21, 2026 at 7:30 PM <i>Gathered as One</i>
Spring	Friday, May 29, 2026 at 7:30 PM <i>Lights Camera Music!</i>



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Mission Statement

The mission of the Manassas Chorale shall be:

- To provide an opportunity for singers to maintain and improve their musical skills and to enjoy singing;
- To present for public entertainment and personal enrichment programs of high-quality vocal music;
- To promote greater appreciation and enjoyment of good music, both classical and modern;
- To act as musical ambassadors representing the Northern Virginia area;
- To serve as a community asset by bringing people together to help meet essential social, educational, and cultural needs.

Welcome!

The handbook is designed to give you most of the information you will need as a member of the Manassas Chorale. Additional information may be provided at rehearsals, via email, our website, or Facebook. Stay up to date!

If you have any questions, please contact the Executive Director Jennifer Blanchard (jblanchard@manassaschorale.org).

Joining the Chorale

Membership is open to high school and adult singers who complete a successful audition.

Prospective members are asked to attend an open rehearsal on select Tuesdays, 7:30-9:20 pm, in the Fellowship Hall (underneath the Sanctuary) at Manassas Baptist Church (8800 Sudley Road).

Open rehearsals for the 2025-2026 season:

- Fall: Aug 26 and Sep 2
- Winter: Oct 14 and 21
- Voices United: Jan 6 and 13
- Spring: Mar 24 and 31

After attending an open rehearsal, prospective singers may schedule an audition to be held after rehearsal in the following weeks. The Executive Director handles scheduling at the member table and provides music and other details via email.

Responsibilities of Membership

- Maintain regular attendance per guidelines for each segment (see Attendance on page 6).
- Be on time and prepared for rehearsals – bring your music, a pencil, and a water bottle if needed.
- Learn the music by using the provided audio files to practice at home.
- Follow rehearsal behavior guidelines (see Rehearsal Etiquette on page 7).
- Maintain financial good standing by paying dues and other fees on time (see Payment on page 8).
- Encourage community attendance at our concert by helping promote the Chorale through word of mouth, email, sharing on social media, etc.
- Consider volunteering – we have a variety of roles to fill!

Chorale Ensemble

The Chorale Ensemble is composed of about 30 Chorale members selected by the Artistic Director at the start of the season. The Ensemble usually sings several selections at each concert and represents the Chorale by performing at community functions where a smaller group of singers is requested or is necessary due to space limitations.

Ensemble rehearses at 6:45 pm prior to regular Chorale rehearsals. The attendance policy is the same as the Chorale, with the added requirement that three unexcused tardies will equal one absence. Excessive absences may result in removal from the Ensemble.

If openings occur during the year, auditions may be held, or the Artistic Director may fill the vacancy based on the most recent Chorale audition scores.

Audition Process

To Join the Chorale:

Prospective members should attend an open rehearsal and schedule an audition. The Executive Director will provide audition music and other details via email.

To Stay in the Chorale:

Members will re-audition every two years after joining or at the discretion of the Artistic Director to maintain the vocal quality of the group. Each segment, members will be notified if they need to re-audition. The Executive Director will coordinate sign-ups. Members will re-audition on a piece of music performed at the last concert; if they did not sing in that concert, they will use the standard audition piece.

Audition Results

Judges will score the audition and provide comments. The average of the judges' scores will be the singer's audition score.

The Artistic Director will determine the minimum score for acceptance into Chorale membership and has the discretion to deny membership to a singer even if they have a passing score. The Artistic Director will notify each singer of the results of their audition.

If a singer fails the audition, they will be eligible to audition again in a year. If a singer's annual membership extends past the time of the unsuccessful audition, they will be entitled to a prorated refund of their membership dues.

Audition Criteria

For all auditions, new and returning, singers will be rated by a two-judge panel, one of whom is the Artistic Director, on the following criteria:

- **Tonal Accuracy (20 points)**
 - Good intonation, correct notes
- **Rhythmic Accuracy (20 points)**
 - Correct note values, rests, and tempo
- **Phrasing (15 points)**
 - Correct breathing and phrasing of text
- **Dynamics/Interpretation/Style/Mood (10 points)**
 - Correct musical expression, notable difference in volume changes
- **Diction (15 points)**
 - Correct and resonant vowel sounds, distinct consonants, text is understandable
- **Sight singing (10 points)**
 - Correct note values and rhythms
- **Ear training (10 points)**
 - Correct note values and rhythms
- **Vocal range (no points; to assess singer's highest and lowest pitches and to assign voice part)**



Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to maintain the quality of our music!

Rehearsals are held Tuesday evenings, 7:30-9:20 pm, in the Fellowship Hall (underneath the Sanctuary) of Manassas Baptist Church (8800 Sudley Rd).

The first rehearsal of the season is Tue Aug 26, 2025. The first rehearsal after the winter break is Tue Jan 6, 2026.

Members must meet attendance requirements for each concert segment (not including mandatory dress rehearsals). For 2025-2026:

- Fall (October).....5 of 7 (includes Sat Sep 6)
- Winter (December).....7 of 9 (includes Sat Nov 8)
- Voices United (March).....8 of 10
- Spring (May).....8 of 10

Members must register their own attendance at each rehearsal. Members may not miss more than half an hour in order to be counted present.

If a member exceeds the maximum allowable absences (*and has also attended at least half of the segment’s rehearsals*), they will need to sing for the Artistic Director to determine their concert preparedness. The Artistic Director has the discretion to deny participation in the concert.

Members who have to sing for the Artistic Director for more than two consecutive concerts will be considered on probation.

NEW MEMBERS: Please be aware that regardless of the date on which you join, you are responsible for meeting the attendance requirement of a particular segment. If you do not join until the second or third rehearsal, the first one or two rehearsals will be considered “missed” for you.

Dress Rehearsals

Dress rehearsals are MANDATORY unless otherwise arranged with the Artistic Director. Only situations such as family emergencies, illness, or other unavoidable circumstances will be considered as excusable absences. Failure to attend the dress rehearsal may result in denial of participation in the concert.

Dress rehearsals are held at the Hylton Performing Arts Center. Concert attire is NOT required. Comfortable clothes and shoes are encouraged.

For 2025-2026:

- Tuesday, October 7, 2025
7:00-9:30 PM
- Tuesday, December 9, 2025
7:00-9:30 PM
- Tuesday, March 17, 2026
7:00-9:30 PM
- Thursday, May 28, 2026
7:00-9:30 PM

NOTE: Scheduling conflicts with the Hylton may require that dress rehearsal times and/or dates be changed. Any changes will be announced well in advance.

Rehearsal Etiquette

- Arrive on time for rehearsal (or early if you have member business like picking up music, paying dues/fees, etc.).
- Visit the member table to get a copy of the Chorale Notes and any other information and take care of any member business.
- Sit in your assigned seat per the Chorale Notes seating chart. If there is an issue, please see the Artistic Director after rehearsal.
- Bring your music, a pencil to mark your music, and a water bottle if needed. No other food or beverages are allowed.
- NO PERFUMES, COLOGNES, OR SCENTED BODY LOTIONS. Singers may have asthma or allergies.
- Mute all electronic devices.
- No talking when the Artistic Director is speaking.
- No talking or singing along when the Artistic Director is working with another vocal section.



Music

Members will receive a music packet at the start of each segment. Singers are expected to mark their music in pencil for breathing, rhythm, dynamics, etc.

Singers are responsible for learning their music at home using the provided audio tracks, available on the website at this address: manassaschorale.org/rehearsal-files.

Music is returned to the Chorale after each concert, where it is placed in a library for the Chorale or other musical groups to use at a later time.

Social Times

Members of the Chorale are encouraged to enjoy one another's company and to form lasting friendships. Periodically throughout the year, "fellowship times" will take place after rehearsals. These occasions will be announced well in advance, and members may be asked to contribute refreshments. The Chorale also usually has a dinner in Williamsburg following the Bruton Parish concert.

Costs

DUES

The Manassas Chorale is considered an annual membership organization. Singers join for one year (four consecutive concert segments). Renewal reminders are sent to members each segment.

The annual membership dues for the 2025-2026 season are **\$136** for adult singers and **\$100** for high school singers. Dues may be paid in their entirety or in installments of at least \$34 each.

Members must be paid in full or have a signed payment agreement in place with the Treasurer by the fourth rehearsal of the segment in which they join, to be in good financial standing.

ATTIRE

Members must purchase formal and informal concert attire (see Concert Attire on page 9 for details). Members are also responsible for any additional costs of alterations if needed.

- Formal women's attire = \$110 (estimate only)
- Formal men's attire = \$110 (estimate only)
- Informal attire (men/women) = \$25

PERFORMANCE FOLDER

Members must have a matte black folder to hold their music for all performances. Folders may be purchased from the Chorale for \$14 or singers may provide their own.

Payments

Payments may be made to the Chorale in three ways:

- ONLINE (dues and patron donations only) via Paypal on the Chorale website
- CHECK – make payable to Manassas Chorale, and note what payment is for in the memo line. Checks may be placed in payment box on the member table at rehearsal, or mailed to:

Manassas Chorale
PO Box 101
Manassas VA 20108
- CASH – only at rehearsals; you must use a Cash Envelope at the member table and note your name, date, payment, and what it is for

This process does not include ticket sales; those are done directly through the Hylton (see Concert Tickets on page 10).

Scholarships

Financial need should not prevent anyone from joining the Chorale! Scholarship funds are available to members who may be in need of financial assistance with their dues and/or attire costs.

To inquire about these funds, please indicate on your registration form, and the Treasurer will be in contact to work out details.

Performances

The Chorale presents four major concerts during the season at the Hylton Performing Arts Center, in October, December, March, and May/June. In addition, the Chorale performs a December concert at Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg, as well as smaller performances at local retirement homes, churches, and other venues. These will be announced as needed. Attendance is encouraged, but not required, outside of the four major concerts at the Hylton.

Hylton Performing Arts Center

The Hylton Performing Arts Center is located on the Prince William campus of George Mason University. A map and directions to the Hylton are available on their website at <https://hyltoncenter.org/plan-your-visit/getting-here>.

For dress rehearsals, performers may park in the lot behind the Hylton and enter through the backstage door at the loading dock.

For concert nights, performers are asked to park in the Discovery lot. Carpooling and shuttling to the backstage door is encouraged.



Concert Attire

The Chorale performs in both formal and informal attire. New members must contact the Concert Attire Chairperson immediately following their successful audition to order their attire.

Formal attire, women:

- Long black skirt and blouse as purchased through the Chorale.
- Black dress shoes and black hose.
- Only small, simple earrings may be worn; no dangling or large hoop earrings. No other jewelry is permitted except for watches and rings.



Formal attire, men:

- Black tuxedo, white shirt, black bow tie and cummerbund as purchased through the Chorale or provided on your own.
- Black dress shoes and black socks.
- Watches may be worn.



Informal attire, men and women:

- Blue Chorale polo shirt as purchased through the Chorale.
- Black pants.
- Black shoes and socks.



Concert Tickets

Concert tickets are purchased directly from the Hylton. Season tickets will be sold up until the first concert. Season tickets are \$90 for orchestra and parterre seating and \$83 for balcony seating

Tickets for any of our individual concerts go on sale starting August 1, 2025 (subject to the Hylton's policies). Concert tickets are \$25 for orchestra and parterre seating and \$23 for balcony seating.

For both season and individual tickets, children age 18 and under are free, but you must inform the box office that you require a child's ticket so they may reserve a seat next to those you purchase. George Mason students are free with student ID.

Tickets may be purchased:

- In person at the Hylton Box Office (Tue-Sat, 10 AM – 6 PM) or on the night of the concert
- By phone at 703-993-7759 (Tue-Sat, 10 AM – 6 PM, \$5 service charge added per ticket)
- Online at www.hyltoncenter.org (\$5 service charge added per ticket)

Concert CDs

Each major concert at the Hylton is recorded and CDs are made available to Chorale members ONLY for \$13. *They are not sold to the general public.* CDs may be pre-ordered and pre-paid at rehearsals prior to each concert; the deadline for ordering is one week following each concert with the exception of the Spring Concert. All Spring Concert CD orders MUST be placed by the date of the concert – NO orders will be taken after that date. CDs will be available for pick-up during the next concert segment or in the month following the Spring Concert.

Concerts with a Cause

Twice a year the Chorale partners with local service organizations for "Concerts with a Cause." The Board of Directors selects a worthy cause and singers and audience members are asked to donate specific items at the concert, per the organization's request.

In the past, the Chorale has supported such causes as SERVE, the Haymarket Food Pantry, Youth for Tomorrow, Matthew's Center, BARN Transitional Housing, the Manassas Senior Center, and the Prince William Hospital Pediatric Ward. Please let the Board know if you would like to suggest a local organization for the Chorale to support.

Voices United Festival Choir

Voices United is an annual musical gathering open to singers from all walks of life, aged high school through retirement. There is no audition. Registered singers participate in preliminary rehearsals, followed by a two-day workshop with a guest clinician and conductor, capped by an evening concert in conjunction with the Manassas Chorale.

The Chorale sings the first half of the concert and the Voices United Festival Choir sings the second half; the two choirs join for a combined finale piece. Members of the Chorale are encouraged, but not required, to participate in Voices United. Registration is separate from that of Chorale and takes place in February.

More information is available on the website: manassaschorale.org/voices-united.

E-mail

E-mail is the Chorale's primary form of communication. ***Please be sure the Chorale has your current email address.*** If you need to change your contact information, please notify the Executive Director.

To contact the Chorale in general:

info@manassaschorale.org

This email is monitored by the Executive Director and the Artistic Director.

To contact the Artistic Director, Becky Verner:

bverner@manassaschorale.org

To contact the Executive Director, Jennifer Blanchard:

jblanchard@manassaschorale.org

To contact the President, Mark Dodge:

mdodge@manassaschorale.org

To contact the Treasurer, Wayne Stohs:

treasurer@manassaschorale.org

Website and Facebook

The Manassas Chorale's website is <http://manassaschorale.org>.

The contents of this handbook are posted there, as well as our concert calendar and much more additional information.

The Chorale also has its own Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ManassasChorale>.

If you are on Facebook, please "like" our page. Please also "share" our status updates to promote our concerts and other happenings. Occasionally changes to rehearsals will be posted as well.

Funding

The Manassas Chorale is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It has four major sources of income to offset expenses: ticket sales from the Hylton, membership dues, patrons and grants, and fundraising.

Patrons and Grants

The Chorale's Patron Program encourages companies and individuals to donate to the Chorale at various levels of support. All levels are listed in our concert programs and on our website.

Corporate and program patrons may receive graphic representation in our concert programs, in addition to being listed and hyperlinked on our website. Corporate patrons may also receive additional benefits such as their logo on all print advertising. A complete list of corporate patron benefits is available. Individual patrons may receive concert tickets vouchers if they choose.

Members are encouraged to reach out to local businesses to become corporate or program patrons, or become individual patrons themselves.

The Chorale is a member of the Prince William County Arts Council and has received grants from that organization as well as the City of Manassas and the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

Fundraising

Our main fundraiser is PECANS!



Pecan sales take place in the fall when the pecans are freshly harvested. Members take orders from friends and family and fresh pecans are delivered in November in time for holiday baking.

We may also participate in additional fundraisers throughout the season. If you have a fundraising idea, please contact the President (mdodge@manassaschorale.org).



About the Manassas Chorale

The Manassas Chorale was founded in 1994, and the original group of about 25 singers has since tripled in size to become a 75-voice auditioned organization. The mission of the Chorale is to promote a greater appreciate and enjoyment of quality music, both classical and contemporary, throughout the greater Manassas community. The Chorale is the official choral group in residence at the Hylton Performing Arts Center located on the Prince William campus of George Mason University.

Under the direction of Becky Verner since 1997, the Chorale and its members have performed locally at various locations in Old Town Manassas, including the Loy Harris Pavilion and the Manassas Museum, as well as for retirement homes, churches, and civic groups. Further afield the group has performed yearly at Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg since 2002, and at the National Cathedral and Constitution Hall in Washington DC. They have also performed at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York City. Internationally, members of the Chorale have sung on three European tours in 2011, 2016, and 2018.

For more information and a more detailed history of the Chorale, please visit our website, www.manassaschorale.org.



About the Artistic Director



Rebecca Verner

703-361-2146 x291 (w)

bverner@manassaschorale.org

Rebecca (Becky) D. Verner has directed the Chorale since 1997. In the years since, the Chorale has grown from an organization of 25 singers to the group you see this season. The Chorale has sung annually at Candlelight Concerts in Williamsburg since 2002, performed twice at Carnegie Hall and at Lincoln Center in New York City, and sung internationally in Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Wales, and England as part of several European tours. The Chorale has also sung locally for veterans events, local clubs, assisted living facilities, and for many community events. Becky is also Director of Traditional Music at Manassas Baptist Church, where she leads the Sanctuary Choir and Evensong Bells, plans traditional worship services, and coordinates events for senior adults. A member of the American Choral Directors Association and the Manassas Museum Associates Board, Becky enjoys shopping, eating at local restaurants, and attending concerts. She and her husband Dan have two grown daughters, Amy and Alyssa, and a cat named Calypso.

About the Accompanist



Kristina Schenck

703-498-8256 (h)

kristina.schenck@mpark.net

Kristina Schenck has served as the Chorale Accompanist since January 2016. Kristina is also the Music Associate at Grace United Methodist Church where she directs the Wesley Singers (youth choir), Treble Ensemble, Grace Notes, and accompanies the Chancel Choir. She is in her twenty-fifth year as the Director of Choral Activities at Manassas Park High School where she directs the Chamber Singers, Concert Choir, Bella Voce Treble Choir and MP Bass Singers. In addition, she is the Assistant Marching Band Director of the Marching Cougars and the music director of each spring musical. Kristina also serves as the Manassas Park High School Fine & Performing Arts Department Chair and the Fine & Performing Arts Content Lead for the Manassas Park City School division. In 2015, she was the MPHS nominee to the Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award. A native of New Jersey, Kristina holds a Bachelor of Music Education (Vocal Concentration) from The College of New Jersey and a Master of Music in Music Education from Boston University. She and her husband Michael reside in Manassas and have two grown children.

Board of Directors



President
Mark Dodge



Vice President
Kathy Retta



Treasurer
Wayne Stohs



Secretary
Julie Mahoney



Chorale At-Large
Eileen Daniels

Chorale At-Large
VACANT



Chorale At-Large
Patty Laing



Chorale At-Large
Kathryn Moore

Community At-Large Members: Bob Beecher, Catherine Drummond

The Artistic Director is also a member of the Board of Directors.

Chorale Staff

Executive Director
Jennifer Blanchard

Concert Manager
Tamara Halstead

Accompanist
Kristina Schenck

Board Responsibilities

- Annually review the mission and vision of the Chorale.
- Appoint, evaluate, and oversee the Artistic Director, Accompanist, Executive Director, and Concert Manager.
- Ensure effective long-range planning and annually review for implementation of goals.
- Lead in the development and acquisition of necessary resources from the community.
- Develop and approve the annual budget, major program plans, and organizational policies.
- Enhance the organization's public standing.
- Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability.
- Recruit and train new board members.

Officer Duties

PRESIDENT

- Lead in the development of a long range vision for the Chorale and in plans to implement the vision
- Provide strategic oversight of Chorale operations, including the Board and various committees
- Manage Board meetings

VICE PRESIDENT

- Assist the President
- Assist with audition process

SECRETARY

- Record minutes of meetings
- Keep rehearsal attendance records

TREASURER

- Lead in annual budget preparation
- Manage receipts and disbursements
- Monitor cash and property
- Provide regular financial reporting
- Coordinate tax reporting

CONCERT MANAGER

- Serve as liaison with Hylton staff
- Provide on-site management on concert nights

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Manage membership
- Coordinate overall concert preparation
- Oversee publicity and marketing strategies (including website and Facebook)
- Monitor revenue/expenses
- Oversee volunteer staff
- Serve as liaison with Artistic Director and President

Committee Chairs

Chamber Representative – Bob Beecher

Concert Attire – Julia Martin

Fundraising – Susie Theobald

Grants – Eileen Daniels

Hospitality – Karen Borozinski

Music Library – Susie Theobald

Patron Development – VACANT

Chorale members are encouraged to volunteer to serve on a committee! There are also numerous opportunities to volunteer on an ad hoc basis throughout the year.

Committee Duties

CHAMBER REPRESENTATIVE

- Attend Chamber of Commerce meetings on behalf of the Chorale

CONCERT ATTIRE

- Ensure all new members have properly fitted concert attire for upcoming concerts and order new attire as needed
- Maintain records of attire purchased by Chorale members

FUNDRAISING

- Coordinate fundraising activities

GRANTS

- Prepare grant proposals
- Submit grant final reports
- Monitor grant compliance

HOSPITALITY

- Coordinate social times for the Chorale
- Arrange refreshment sign-up as needed

MUSIC LIBRARY

- Disburse music to members for each concert segment and collect music when concert is completed
- Maintain records

PATRON DEVELOPMENT

- Pursue individual and corporate patron donations
- Prepare and distribute information to promote the Patron Program

Questions?

If you have any questions about any of the information contained in the handbook or any of the Chorale's policies, please speak to a Board member at any time. We are here to help!