

Dubuque Chorale 2026 Annual Meeting
Meeting convened 6:00 PM, May 7, 2026
Church of the Nativity, Dubuque

Quorum

By-laws require the annual meeting to have over half the board members (6 of 11) present, and 25% of the current Chorale membership. Board members in attendance: Joe Amato, Mark Niemer, Tara Dunn, Sarah Slaughter, Nick Anderson, Macayla Albee. Members attending were at least 25, out of 92 registered members in the directory.

Chorale Artistic Director report

- Amanda's report on **page 2**.

Break to finish eating

Committee reports

- Treasurer (Joe Amato): Report on **page 6**.
- Fundraising & Governance (Terry Eckhart): Report on **page 7**.
- Education & Outreach (Macayla Albee presented Mary Beth Ferrings's report): Report on **page 9**.
- Membership (Nick Anderson): Nick gave a brief synopsis of what the membership committee does.
- Publicity (Sarah Slaughter): Report on **page 8**.
- Logistics (Mark Niemer): Report on **page 10**.

DCCC Program Director report

- Karmella's report on **page 11**.

President's report and board elections

- Mark Niemer's report on **page 12**.
- Jeannie Adams, Susan Tonn, and Mia Scott are going off the board at the end of June. The board nominates Michael Sivill, Danielle Phillips, and Emily Amato to replace them. There were no nominations from the floor. Mark N. moved to elect the three nominees with a single vote, Nick Anderson seconded. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Michael Sivill moved to adjourn at 7:15, Melissa Jensen seconded. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Mark Oppedahl for Mia Scott

Artistic Director's Report

7 MAY 2026 / 6:00 PM / CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

2025-2026 Performances

Ode to the Arts

1. Featured two of our own members - Mary Bryant and Than Chesher - through performances of their original choral compositions
2. Welcomed our own, Tom Taylor, to the podium with Cadenza to begin his work for his master of music degree recital, which continued throughout the season
3. Performed the difficult, At Such a Dizzy Height with guest artists Ann Duchow (violin) and Haley Nicholson (cello)
4. Finally sang Some Nights, purchased and abandoned during one of Amanda's pre-pandemic seasons.
5. Wowed the audience with the choralography of the tenors and basses on Tansulaul and the fast dancing Mouth Music of the sopranos and altos

Songfest

6. Participation was strong across collegiate and community groups, with Music Men and Julien Chamber Choir returning this year. Heartland Harmony did not join us, but all 5 colleges did.
7. The final number, conducted by Victoria Bausman, was performed well by all. To address SATB balance next year, we should return to SATB music, since the baritone line was a little high for some community basses and the baritone line occasionally overpowered the soprano and alto lines.
8. We plan to return to Roosevelt Middle School in February 2027, date pending finalization of Dubuque Community Schools calendar over the summer.

Holiday Pops

9. Smooth logistics, integrating seating and ramp changes between adult and family concerts
10. Cadenza's performance of What Child Is This with Amanda conducting was the least stressful Amanda conducting at the symphony piece to date. Keep up the good work!
11. Small group of sopranos stepped up to sing as Ronettes on Sleigh Ride (and on All I Want for Christmas is you) at both the holiday and family concerts
12. Collaboration with several local soloists was successful, if more complicated, including some earlier rehearsals

Beethoven

13. 164 singers, including new and returning Chorale participants, as well as collegiate students and directors from UD, UWP, Clarke. Loras, and Emmaus
14. With help of collegiate directors, section coordinators, Terry Eckhart, Mark Neimer, and DSO & Heritage Center staff, the program was a smashing success!
15. Received exclusively positive feedback from 5 colleges, Chorale members, DSO players/staff, and audience alike.

Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Harmony

16. Our best transitions yet between numbers to create a 55-minute performance.
17. Really beautiful a capella and accompanied singing from all choirs!
18. A meaningful way to end an impactful season of high-level music making in a variety of styles!

Other Administrative Work

- **Education & Outreach:**
 - Children's Choirs' Communication and Outreach Working Group began to document and create a network for supporting the kids choirs beyond just Mary Beth
 - This expansion needs to continue into next season with a working group of Education & Outreach volunteers
- **Logistics**
 - Tara, Mark, and I created event templates for ensuring that all information about a venue is documented and accessible to the board so that no one person's absence creates information gaps
- **General Organization**
 - I began organizing some of the folders on the board Google drive, and will continue to do so over the summer to help people find information they need quickly without wading through information they do not.

2026-2027 Work

Performance Work

- **Dress Rehearsals & Set Up**

- To avoid last-minute director conflicts, known director conflicts, and conflicts with kids school performances, we are sticking with Friday dress rehearsals for next season
- Set up will continue to happen on Thursday evenings, helping the crew primarily of adult singers (and Amanda) be available to set the performance space
- **FALL CONCERT: On the Road Again**
 - In honor of the 100th anniversary of Route 66, the Dubuque Chorale will embark on a musical journey highlighting roadtrip music, all the people we meet along the way, the place we visit, and the experience of the journey.
- **SPRING CONCERT**
 - Concert will address the duality of measurable time & the immeasurable moments/perception of lived time
 - The first half of the concert will focus on the mechanical elements of time, possibly with a woodblock keeping time through the transitions between each piece. The constant ticking of a metronome/clock/swinging of pendulum - adherence to the clock/calendar/schedule. My grandma always used to tell me to treasure every day as a young mother because “the days are long, but the years are short.” This regular reminder in the little more than a year that her time and his time overlapped kept coming back to me as I was asking “what about time” do we want to communicate through our concert program?
 - Two repertoire options for a pivot piece in the middle of the concert would be J. Lucy Cook’s “Time” or Susan Brumfield’s “No Time.”
 - The second half of the program will deal with the perceived fleeting nature and inconstancy of time.
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- **March Venue Suggestions?**
 - Amanda plans to prioritize work toward this performance in June (venue, repertoire, etc)
 - Artistic Planning Session possible in June as well to gather more ideas, cull through ideas from last session that are well suited for a March concert

Upcoming Season Schedule

1. **Proposed dates for 2026-2027 Season - FALL PREFERENCE CHANGE FROM FEBRUARY REPORT**
 - Classics 1: Oct 3 & 4 @ Five Flags Theater
 - **Chorale Fall Concert - October 24 & 25 (BOL Hilltop Campus) - Friday dress rehearsal**
 - Classics 2: Nov 7 & 8 @ Five Flags Theater
 - **DSO Holiday Pops 2026 schedule (Five Flags)**
 - **Thursday, 12/3 & Friday, 12/4: 7pm rehearsal**

- **Saturday 12/5: 11:30am rehearsal (Family Concert)**
 - **Saturday 12/5: 1pm Family Concert**
 - **Saturday 12/5: 7:30pm & Sunday 12/6: 2pm DSO Concert**
- DSORocks! – January 14, 15, 16 (all 8pm)
- Classics 3: Feb 13 & 14 @ Five Flags Theater
- **SongFest (February 20 - #1, February 6 - #2, February 27 - #3 (UD & Loras spring break), March 6 - #4 (UD & Loras spring break) - UWP calendar not publicly posted**
 - This year was challenging from a planning perspective & with collegiate schedules, but with UD & Loras breaks the first week in February should still remain our second choice.
- Classics 4: Mar 20 & 21 @ Five Flags Theater
- Easter is Sunday, March 28th
- Mid-spring concert for adults? Can add this item to Artistic Planning Committee meeting
 - What kind of collaborations are you seeking?
 - Stand-alone concert of a specific style?
 - Should use some of the Artistic Planning Meeting items, especially the “Anchor Piece” options to build a concert option here
 - Collaborators may determine best date (March/April)
- **Final spring concert - May 1 & 2 (BOL Hilltop Campus) - Friday dress rehearsal**
- Classics Finale: May 8 & 9 @ University of Dubuque, Heritage Center, Butler Hall

Treasurer Annual Report

2025-2026 Season News

- Credit card payment now paid manually, monthly, vs. automatic withdrawals
 - Set up online access to cancel autopay which would have paid fraudulent charges
 - Dispute resolved with no charges
 - If paid, \$2k would have been tied up as a credit (no refund)
- Square account established and reader purchased to facilitate dues payments
 - 18 chorale members paid by Square, as well as
 - Many DCCC memberships
- Chorale dues increased for 2025-2026 season:
 - Full season increased from \$90 to \$110
 - Half season increased from \$50 to \$60
 - No changes to Cadenza (extra \$30), under 27 (\$25), or DCCC (\$150)
 - Did not impact membership numbers
- Spring concert
 - Free-will donations: \$1745 cash, 400 checks
 - Both nights over \$1000, a record
 - Collected \$426 for Grandview thank-you
 - Collected \$283 for Holy Trinity (DCCC host) thank-you

Dubuque Chorale Annual Fundraising Report, May 7, 2026 (fiscal yr 7/1/25-6/30/26)

Fundraising Income 2025-2026 season:	Budgeted	Received (as of 5/4/26)
Individual donations	\$7,000	\$12,005
Corporate donations	\$7,500	\$7,700
Foundation donations	\$5,000	\$4,500
Grants	\$20,898	\$17,745
Totals:	\$40,398	<u>\$41,950</u>

(Summary of donors- Corporate: Gronen Properties, through Merry Millwork \$4000; Premier Bank \$2500; New Melleray Abbey \$500; Morning Optimist Club \$400; Srs of Mt. St. Francis \$300. Foundations: Butler Family Foundation \$500; Wahlert Foundation \$1500; Henry Family Foundation \$2500. Grants: Ia Arts Council \$5000; City of Dubuque Operating Support \$2745; DRA \$10,000, specific for Songfest26.

Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque summary:

Gifts to the Foundation in our name for 25-26: \$1,200.

Accounts in our name: as of 3/10/26: \$87,678. (We only get interest on this money.)

Interest dispersed to us this year: \$3,620 (4.1%)

Fundraising expenses: printing and mailing of fall appeal letter with donor envelopes (along with a publicity card) \$1,707.

Fundraising Committee duties (would welcome volunteers) : write the annual appeal letter, write thank yous to all donors, obtain sponsors, help with Merry Millwork (plan and work), find new grant opportunities, write grants and their reports, collect data for reports, write monthly Board report. Bring new ideas!

Teresa (Terry) Eckhart, Fundraising Chair

Annual Report - 2025/26 season
Dubuque Chorale Publicity and Marketing
May 7, 2025

This year the publicity committee marketed Ode to the Arts, SongFest, and Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Harmony. Our behind the scenes efforts this year set some new standards and clarified some workflows that will set us up well for future seasons.

Picking up from where we left off last year, we updated the logo colors. The Chorale stayed mostly the same, just with brighter shades of purple and green. The Children's Choirs got a new color that fits better with our overall color scheme. With these color updates we were able to replace our banners with a new design by Macayla Albee.

Speaking of new designs, Macayla also created a new logo for SongFest, which we will continue to use in the coming years. This design also won an award for Best Nonprofit Marketing Campaign, through the Dubuque Chapter of the American Advertising Federation. Congrats, and thank you to Macayla!

Another major bright spot this year was our social media presence. As many of you know, Danielle Philips is our social media manager and she is nearing the end of a Masters Degree in Communication through Drake University. The great thing for us is that she's been able to apply everything she's learning to our organization and has made our socials more effective than ever! This year, she's kept a very consistent post schedule, consisting of video snippets from each rehearsal, member and director profiles, concert photos, and sponsor appreciation posts. We've seen a massive increase in our number of followers, plus more likes and shares of individual posts. Thanks to you all for continuing to follow/like/share, and big thanks to Danielle for managing everything!

For concert advertising in addition to social media pushes, we purchased print ad space in Julien's Journal, 365Ink, and the Telegraph Herald. Last year, we started utilizing billboards, and we continued that this year. Other print materials include postcards and programs. My next shoutout goes to Mary Bryant, who uses her incredible attention to detail to put together our programs. This year she started utilizing some open source design software to save costs. We also continued to use program notes adapted from my Julien's Journal articles. Thank you again, Mary!

The website also got a redesign this year. Thanks to Macayla for the layout, Mark Oppedahl for keeping things updated as always, and to everyone who helped proofread. If anyone continues to notice issues or you can't find something that used to be there, please email Macayla or Mark O.

We also started using a new program to keep track of our mailing list. There are still some things to clean up, but this helped the last mailing go a lot smoother. That said, if you received more postcards to your address this spring than you would like, please let me know and I'll get it sorted out for next time!

We've been very fortunate to have folks with design and marketing experience on the committee, and this year we would like to utilize more of the talent in the chorale membership on the concert designs. We are inviting submissions from anyone in the chorale who is interested in creating a design for either the fall or spring concert. The design would be used in our print, billboard, and social media advertising for that concert. We're looking for eye-catching concepts that capture the theme and communicate the right tone for the concert. You're welcome to submit a design or multiple designs for either or both of the spring and fall concerts. There will be a document going out soon in an email that will have all the details, but if anyone has any questions, please direct them to me. You can find my contact information in the member directory, or email publicity@dubuquechorale.org

Thanks to the board and to everyone who helps with publicity projects. I look forward to next year!

-Sarah Slaughter, Publicity Chair

Education & Outreach Annual Report

- Thank you to our volunteers this season, including Jennifer Maus and her daughter, Heidi Johnson, and Tara Dunn for helping organize the retreat
- Children had new red shirts this season - thank you to the Optimist Club for purchasing those; we are ordering new red vests for next season which we will keep and reuse
- Started expanding the Edu/Outreach committee beyond Mary Beth in early spring - includes Karmella, myself, Amanda, and Mark N.; goal being to have other hands to help when Mary Beth is out of town and to expand our outreach efforts
- Continue working over summer to better advertise/market DCCC to gain new members
 - New digital registration & placement interview sign-up using Little Green Light for this season; hopefully making it easier to register
 - Increased number of flyers for teachers so they can give one to each student
 - Karmella and Mary Bryant recorded and edited new video that teachers will show
 - Updated DCCC information on the new website
 - Sharing more photos and videos of DCCC with Danielle/Publicity
- Spring interviews are this Saturday (May 9th and next, May 16th)

Logistics Committee Annual report 2026

Committee Members: Mark Niemer, Mary Beth Ferring (librarian), Tara Dunn (vice-president), Curt Zeimet, Mike Josefowicz (all as needed)

The Logistics Committee is responsible for the physical stuff that the Chorale has, keeping track of it and making sure that we have the right material and supplies in the right place at the right time. We help the artistic staff with any production needs for Chorale performances. This includes set up and take down for performances. We also work with other committees (publicity, education, etc) to see that production needs are met.

We have been using Eleanor Roosevelt Middle School auditorium for Songfest and primarily Bread of Life Presbyterian Church Hilltop campus (formerly Westminster Pres Church) for most of our performances. We have contracts signed for performances at BoLPC for next year 2026-2027 as well.

We purchased a second electronic piano as a backup of our current one. We used this for warm ups for the Beethoven at the Heritage Center and it seemed to work reasonably well.

Curt Zeimet has been graciously towing the trailer when needed. Mike Josefowicz has helped with transportation of the shells to and from the office storage space.

We are continuing to use student stage managers to help out with our concerts. Tara Dunn has developed a flow sheet for concert preparation as well.

The piano at GrandView has issues with tuning. We are working with Roger Tyler (piano tuner and technician) on possible solutions.

Thanks to everyone who helps out with getting things done. Many hands make light work!

Respectfully Submitted, Mark Niemer

Dubuque Chorale Children's Choirs
Directors' Report
May 7, 2026

The 12th season of the Dubuque Chorale Children's Choirs was successful on many fronts. We started the year with 53 singers, and ended with 42, which means we kept about 80% of our singers.

We performed our regularly scheduled concerts, including the fall and spring Chorale concerts, the library concert, the Symphony Family Holiday concert, and the Legati Singers performed at the DACU Thanksgiving service.

We were blessed to have two interns this year, Chloe Crow and Katey Theis. Katey stepped up to show Chloe how we do things. They were an integral part of our success. We also had many parent and Chorale volunteers, that helped with rehearsals, performances, the retreat, and even serving cake - thanks Tara, Makayla, Jennifer, and Eliana.

This year brought some logistical challenges as we welcomed two singers with physical disabilities that helped us to think of new ways to be inclusive. We worked to perform in spaces that accommodated them physically and collaborated with the symphony to provide a safe way on and off the Five Flags stage. In addition, we had one student who needed support in both rehearsal and performances. We functioned, as a team, to provide needed support.

In addition to all of that, the children's choirs' interns, directors and volunteers worked to come up with a plan to navigate the absence of Victoria during her maternity leave. Although Victoria was missed, I believe the singers felt supported and upheld during her absence and continued to have a great musical experience.

We expanded the Education and Outreach committee, focusing on finding new ways to recruit and on the many things Mary Beth does so that more hands can make light work.

I am so proud to be a part of this organization, and continue to appreciate how all of us look to seek solutions and to support each other.

President's Annual Report May 2026

This last year was quite a season for us! In addition to Beethoven's 9th Symphony "Choral", we performed in 4 other concerts over the course of the last year.

As a board, we bring together the creative and business aspects of running the Dubuque Chorale. This involves artistic planning, communication and marketing, budgeting and finance, concert preparation and logistical support to make a concert run as smoothly as possible. We purchased a second electric piano as a backup to our older electric piano with funds from Rick Rollefson's memorial in July 2026. We updated our website this year. We are piloting a new software program for database management and communication. With many thanks to Terry Eckhart, we are on track to be on budget this year. We had a successful program to support 2 interns working with the DCCC this year.

In terms of fundraising, we have been very fortunate to have Terry dedicate a lot of effort to this process. Last year we did support several people getting additional training on grant writing. The long term plan is to broaden the number of people who can help out in this effort. If it were not for the grants and foundational support that we receive, it would be extremely difficult to run and manage the Dubuque Chorale. This is also true for other creative and performing arts organizations. As an example, our tuition would more than double if we did not have the fundraising efforts.

We are continuing on our strategic plan for 2022-2027. This includes emphasis on inclusiveness and diversity and community outreach in addition to growth in the DC and DCCC.

I want to thank everyone who has served on the board of directors this year. *Recognize board members, committee members, any other volunteers*) If you are on the board, please stand. Now, if there are any other committee members present, please also stand. Jeannie Adams has served 2 terms on the board, and Susan Tonn and Mia Scott have each served one term. They are rotating off at this time. The board is nominating Michael Sivill, Emily Amato and Danielle Phillips each to a 3 year position on the board. Nominations will also be taken from the floor.

Again, I want to thank everyone for their volunteer help this year with regard to time and talents. I also want to express gratitude and admiration for our artistic staff, Amanda, Than, Karmella, Victoria, Sharon, Keisy and Amanda Hauta. They are all immensely talented. Also, with the transition and closure of the music department at Clarke University, we stand with and support Amanda and Keisy during this period of transition and uncertainty.

Great Give Day is a day devoted to online giving, sponsored by the Dubuque Community Foundation. It is an excellent opportunity to support the Chorale as well as your other favorite charities. It is usually in mid-May. Look for <https://www.greatgiveday.org/> then look for Dubuque Chorale. All of the donations this year will support the operating fund.

Respectfully submitted, Mark Niemer, President, 2025-2026