



51st Davies Concert Series Presents
Classic and Contemporary Choral Music
with Chesapeake Choral Arts Society

Sunday, December 11, 2022
4:00 PM

Davies Unitarian Universalist Congregation
7400 Temple Hills Road
Temple Hills, MD 20748

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*Classic and Contemporary Choral Music
with Chesapeake Choral Arts Society*

Sunday, December 11, 2022

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Excerpts from *Messiah*

“And the glory of the Lord”
“For unto us a child is born”
“Hallelujah”

George Friedrich Handel

The Oxen

Thomas Hardy/W.G. Pete Stokes

Mary, Did You Know?

Mark Lowry/Buddy Greene

Caroling, Caroling

performed by the MadriGals:

(Debby Holder, Denise Pratt, Sandy Woodward, Denise Bauman, Carol Charnock,
Joan Donnelly, Karen Nale, Pat Stokes, and Therese Thiedeman)

Willa Huston/Alfred Burt

O Holy Night

performed by Nichole Collins

Adolphe Adam

The Christ Child is Born

performed by the Men of Chesapeake Choral Arts Society:

(Joshua Dennis, tambourine; Karl Gabrielsen, Mike Gahan, Jim Henson, W. G. Pete Stokes,
Scott Wesley, Ktystaufeaux Williams, David Donnelly, Michael Mickey, John Nale,
Bob Rudderow, Steve Schwab, and John Van Blarcom)

Roger Emerson, arr.

Prayers from the Old Church

Carol Charnock, alto soloist; Zack Mackay, cello; Josh Cockerham, piano

“I. Jesus Prayer”
“II. Cherubic Hymn”
“III. Lord’s Prayer”

Mary Coy Whitmore

Silent Night

performed by Debby Holder, Carol Charnock, W.G. Pete Stokes, and Josh Cockerham
Mike Gahan and Therese Thiedeman, guitars

Franz Gruber/Joseph Mohr

About the Chesapeake Choral Arts Society (CCAS)

Founded in 1996, the mission of the Chesapeake Choral Arts Society is to bring excellent choral music to a variety of audiences of all ages in Southern Maryland through concerts, collaborations with other music groups, and performances for community organizations. By focusing on musical masterworks from the past to the present, audiences and performers will expand their knowledge of and appreciation for the choral music art form. For upcoming concerts, auditions, and more, visit <https://chesapeakechoral.com>.

Sopranos

Helen Barber
Robin Boswell
Sarah Carlson
Nicole Collins
Rebecca Clark
Kelsey Clarke
Jessica Elliott
Carole Facey
Elizabeth Grenier
Debby Holder
Crystal Kijesky
Helena Kijesky
Percy Percival-Lavern
Bea Patterson
Denise Pratt
Karen Robertson
Jennifer Vorm
Gail Walsh
Lourdes Williams
Sandy Woodward

Altos

Denise Bauman
Jan Buelow
Carol Charnock
Ann Chess
Ana Davidson
Kristi Davidson
Joan Donnelly
Julie Ehman
Helen Harrington
Jane K. Linton
Karen McIntyre
Karen Nale
Martha Nortrup
Elaine Pollard
Catherine Riley
Karen Runde
Lynn Scotton
Jeanne Stern
Pat Stokes
Therese Thiedeman
Susan Valdez
Kathy Wesley

Tenors

Joshua Dennis
Karl Gabrielsen
Mike Gahan
Jim Henson
W.G. Pete Stokes
Scott Wesley
Krystaufeaux Williams

Basses

David Donnelly
Michael Mickey
John Nale
Bob Rudderow
Steve Schwab
John Van Blarcom

Leroy Pressley, Artistic Director

Leroy Pressley is a retired public school music teacher for the state of Maryland. As an educator, Mr. Pressley has received numerous awards including the Golden Apple teacher award for Excellence from St. Mary's County Board of Education, Exemplary Teacher award from Charles County Public School System, as well as Outstanding Music Teacher of the Year award for the Southern Region of Maryland. Mr. Pressley is no stranger to conducting. He has conducted St. Maries Musica, a community ensemble, as well as the Adult Wind Ensemble and the Recreation and Parks Community Chorus. He is also the founder of St. Peter Claver's Gospel choir in St. Mary's County. As a guest conductor, Mr. Pressley has performed with the Cosmic Symphony and the Chesapeake Choral Arts Society. He also conducted the honors choirs (Elementary through High School) for the Southern Maryland region, as well as Baltimore County, the Eastern Shore, and Washington, D.C. Mr. Pressley's musical theater credits include high school and community theater productions in Connecticut and Maryland, and he has recently been serving as the music director of the Prince George's Children's Theater and Teen Performance Ensemble for Prince George's County, Maryland. Under the direction of Mr. Pressley, his various choirs have performed in Florida, Maryland, Virginia, New York, and Connecticut. Their venues have included the 9/11 Memorial, the United Nations U.S. Embassy, the Maryland State House, the Kennedy Center, as well as the White House, to name a few. Mr. Pressley holds a B.A. in voice and music education from St. Mary's College of Maryland, and an M.M. in conducting from the University of Hartford, Hartt School of Music, Connecticut.

Josh Cockerham, Accompanist

As a lifelong resident of Charles County, Josh Cockerham is thrilled to be entering his seventh season as the accompanist for the Chesapeake Choral Arts Society. He began taking piano lessons when he was eight years old, and he is delighted by the opportunity to perform with such a talented group of musicians and singers in the Society. In addition to his work with CCAS, Josh has provided accompaniment for eight musicals at Grace Christian Academy in Waldorf. Among his favorites were *Beauty and the Beast* and *The King and I*. Josh is actively involved in the music program at his church, Marbury Baptist, where he serves as the Director of Music and leads the church's praise team. He is also active in his community, serving on the board of directors for the United Way of Southern Maryland. In his free time, Josh enjoys attending baseball games with his family and interacting with the youth group at his church. He earned his undergraduate degree from Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA, and resides in La Plata with his wife, Jessica, and their son, Caleb Joseph.

W.G. Pete Stokes, CCAS Composer-In-Residence

To the bewilderment of the Army, Pete studied music theory/composition and English poetry on an ROTC scholarship at Temple University. However, following his four years of active duty in the Signal Corps, the Army funded Pete through Temple's law school (no doubt for a more respectable education), and he completed his military career as a JAG officer. After retiring from the Army, Pete worked as an attorney both in private practice for a few years, and then for 13 years in a nonprofit law firm serving low-income and elderly clients. He now has a mostly pro bono solo part-time law practice. While lawyering full time in and out of the Army, Pete stayed active in music by singing in local choral and church groups and composing small works for them. After retiring from the Army, he received commissions from the vocal ensembles Con Viva Musica, Heritage Singers, Washington Vocal Artists, and St. Maries Musica. Pete also received commissions from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for a choral piece for Prince George's County's Tricentennial Celebration, and for 17 children's musicals for M-NCPPC's county-wide annual summer camp programs. In addition, he composed a score for a church musical. Six years ago, Pete was commissioned to write music for the College of Southern Maryland's original *Pinocchio* production. Pete sang at the Kennedy Center with the Paul Hill Chorale and Master Chorale of Washington for seven years before singing with the Chesapeake Choral Arts Society. For the past 19 years, he and his wife, Pat, have both been members of CCAS. A few years after joining, Pete became composer-in-residence, and CCAS has sung 21 of his arrangements and eight original works. He has also arranged five pieces for CCAS's MadriGals women's ensemble and five songs for its Our Three Tenors group.

Mary Coy Whitmore, Composer

Mary Whitmore, known to colleagues and students as "Dr. Mary," holds a Master of Music and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Maryland, College Park, where she studied music composition under the tutelage of Robert Gibson. She began studying composition with David Froom in 2009, and later John Leupold II, as an undergraduate student at St. Mary's College of Maryland, where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Music, with a focus on bassoon performance. Her music has been performed at the Meadowlark Gardens in Vienna, VA; at the River Concert Series in St. Mary's City, the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center in College Park, and other venues across the state of Maryland. Her music was also performed during the Alba Music Festival in Alba, Italy.

In addition to serving as the Music Director of the Davies Concert Series, Dr. Mary is the Deputy Director for the Arts Council of Calvert County. She also volunteers as Administrative Coordinator for the Life Journeys Writers Guild, a nonprofit organization that works to bring the joy and therapeutic benefits of the Written Word to underserved and disenfranchised populations. Dr. Mary teaches wind instruments, piano, voice, and composition/arranging in a private lesson studio in Waldorf, MD. She and her husband Joshua have a three-year-old daughter named Valerie.

Composer's Notes: Prayers from the Old Church

I was a doctoral student at the University of Maryland College Park when my mother passed away while in Hospice care after suffering for three years with ovarian cancer. I had completed my string quartet, *Inevitable Passage*, and dedicated it to her. My dissertation project, a three-movement work for SATB choir, was only a concept at the time.

It had been the suggestion of a dear friend, Larry Robinson, that I compose a piece for the Chesapeake Choral Arts Society, for which he sang tenor. When he would come to visit, I would play what I had written, and he would share his thoughts on it. As the work came together towards the end of 2017, Larry had already spoken to CCAS's director at the time, Michael Santana, about performing the work.

Larry Robinson passed away suddenly in the night on New Year's Eve, only a short time before the piece was completed. *Prayers from the Old Church* is dedicated to him. In the Orthodox Church we say: may his Memory be Eternal.

I passed my dissertation defense and graduated in the spring of 2018. Then in 2020, when Covid-19 caused widespread shutdowns and crippled the performing arts industry, I gave up on *Prayers from the Old Church* ever being performed.

Then in February of this year, Russia invaded Ukraine. I had only recently begun my new job as the Music Director of the Davies Concert Series and was planning this 51st season. I thought of *Prayers from the Old Church* and its third movement – the Lord's Prayer – which I had written in Ukrainian. I reached out to Carol Charnock of CCAS and asked if the choir would be willing to perform it as part of a concert at the Davies. Carol connected me with Leroy Pressley. And now we're here, at the world premiere of *Prayers from the Old Church*. I can't thank Leroy, Carol, the Chesapeake Choral Arts Society, Larry Robinson, and the Davies Concert Series Board of Directors enough for the opportunity to finally bring this piece to life.

Prayers from the Old Church uses the text of three Eastern Orthodox prayers: The first movement is based on the "Jesus Prayer," or Prayer of the Heart, which is typically practiced in a hesychastic context, but may be practiced by anyone. The alto soloist presents a chant melody originating from the Valaam Monastery in Russian Karelia. Slowly, the Valaam chant melody gives way to another iteration of the Jesus Prayer, this time in Ukrainian. When practicing the Prayer, the intention is to progress through three levels through repetition of the words "Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me." The first level, the Prayer of the Lips, is an oral prayer and considered external; at the second level, the mind becomes free of distraction and focused upon the words of the prayer. The final level is the Prayer of the Heart, a subconscious, ceaseless prayer state, where "prayer is no longer something we do, but who we are."

The second movement is a setting of the Cherubic Hymn, in Church Slavonic. It is set in the traditional style for this prayer, which is part of the Orthodox Divine Liturgy. It is more technically demanding than the other two movements and can be divided into two halves – the first half being slower and more somber than the second half.

The third movement is the Lord's Prayer, set in Ukrainian. It opens with an original melody sung by the entire choir in true unison *sotto voce*, as I had written at the time of my dissertation defense: "to evoke themes of simplicity, unity, and peace." Today, I hope you join me in offering these Prayers for Ukraine, as the Ukrainian people continue to suffer under Russian attacks. Слава Україні!

Mary Coy Whitmore

TEXTS

The Oxen by Thomas Hardy

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel,

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

The Jesus Prayer (English Translation)

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.
Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

The Cherubic Hymn (English Translation)

We who mystically represent the Cherubim,
and who sing to the Life-Giving Trinity the thrice-holy hymn,
let us now lay aside all earthly cares
that we may receive the King of all,
escorted invisibly by the angelic orders.
Alleluia

The Lord's Prayer (English Translation)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name
By kingdom come, Thy will be done
On Earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory
Forever, Amen.



The Davies Concert Series is made possible by the Maryland State Arts Council's Creativity Grant and by your generous financial support. Scan the QR code below to make a tax-deductible donation today; thank you for joining us for our 51st Season!

