



2025-2026 Season
Kindred

www.ChesterRiverChorale.org



2025-2026 Season - *Kindred*

This season, the **Chester River Chorale** invites you on a journey through the ties that bind us across time, across cultures, and across generations - all to uncover the shared humanity at the heart of song.

In *A Celtic Christmas*, we travel together to the lush and storied landscapes of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. We will sing songs of hearth and winter light that have echoed across centuries. For many in our ensemble and audience, these carols carry the **spirit of ancestral homelands**, passed down through **generations** as part of a **living heritage**, and for one night, **we will all be transported together** to those lands across the sea.

In the spring, *Where Voices Meet* celebrates a rich tapestry of American music that speaks to struggle and resilience, justice and joy. With **spirituals, gospel, and folk traditions rooted in hope**, we lift up the voices that have helped **define this nation's soul**, past and present. It is a program that reminds us that **wherever voices meet, hearts join**.

Finally, with our second **international tour**, we carry these voices across the ocean, as a portion of our choir brings the music of *Where Voices Meet* to the shores of Ireland. There, **we will join** with choirs from around the world **in a cultural exchange** that affirms what choral singing has always known: that **when we share** our stories in song, **harmony transcends borders** and makes all strangers, **kin**.

With voices raised, we are, at heart, kindred.



Alexis Ward
Artistic Director



Stephanie LaMotte
Assistant Artistic Director
and Pianist

A Celtic Christmas



Friday, December 12, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 13, 2025, 4:00 p.m.

Artwork courtesy of Heather Robuck

Step into a winter's evening of music and memory as the Chester River Chorale presents *A Celtic Christmas* - a celebration of the **sacred and storied holiday traditions of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.**

With carols both ancient and contemporary, this concert weaves together **folk melodies, choral gems, and rich storytelling** that evoke the warmth of hearth and home. From the **hushed beauty** of “The Wexford Carol” and “Oíche Chiúin” (“Silent Night” in Gaelic) to the **spirited charm** of “Christmas in Killarney” and “Bells Over Belfast”, the program balances **reverence with joy, tradition with fresh perspective.**

More than 100 voices will join forces with a **professional chamber orchestra** featuring traditional Celtic instruments including bodhrán, fiddle, Irish whistles, flute, harp, guitar, celesta, strings, and more - creating an **immersive soundscape that bridges centuries and cultures.**

Highlights include Karen Marroli's **powerful new work** *Light of Peace: Celtic Carols for Christmas*, Benjamin Britten's **ethereal** “Balulalow” from *Ceremony of Carols*, and the **world premiere** of “The Fire Was Low” by Artistic Director, Alexis Renee Ward. **With selections** by composers **from across the Celtic world** including Elaine Agnew, Paul Mealor, Eoghan Desmond, and Philip Stopford, the music **honors heritage while offering a deeply personal expression** of the season.

Whether your roots run deep in Celtic soil or you're simply drawn to the spirit of peace, **you are invited to join us for this unforgettable holiday experience.**

Where Voices Meet



Where Voices Meet



Friday, April 17, 2026, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 18, 2026, 4:00 p.m.

Artwork courtesy of Steffi Ricketts

The Chester River Chorale's spring concert, ***Where Voices Meet***, is a powerful celebration of the music that has shaped, and continues to shape, **the American spirit**. From Appalachian folk tunes, shape-note hymns, blues, gospel, and spirituals, this program **honors the diverse traditions** that rise from our **shared roots** and echo with **stories of resilience, hope, and joy**.

With over 100 voices, this concert features music by Aaron Copland, Alice Parker, Moses Hogan, Rosephanye Powell, Ysaye Barnwell, Keith Hampton, Stacey Gibbs, Mac Wilberg, and more. Through **dynamic choral works** and **soulful solos**, the program explores the ways **music can bridge differences, build community, and kindle the sense of belonging** we all seek.

Many of these pieces will also travel with the ensemble to Ireland for the **Chester River Chorale's 2026 international tour**, where members will perform in **historic cathedrals**, collaborate with **Irish choirs**, and **share** this uniquely **American repertoire** at the Fingal International Festival of Voices.

Whether sung on the Eastern Shore of Maryland or across the Atlantic, these songs carry with them a **message of peace, belonging, and** the universal language of **music** - reminding us that **wherever voices meet, hearts are never far behind**.



The Chester River Chorale's (CRC) mission is to provide **opportunity, education, and inspiration for singers** to strive for **artistic excellence** while entertaining **diverse audiences** and **enriching the cultural life** of the community. As a non-auditioned **community choir**, the CRC includes singers with graduate-level music degrees to amateurs who do not read music. **Teenagers to nonagenarians** come together to perform both holiday and spring concerts.

The CRC was **founded in 1999** by Bud Dengler and his wife, Jane. Ann C. Turpin became Artistic Director in 2002 and Douglas Cox took the reins as Artistic Director in 2010. Michelle Sensenig became our first Assistant Director in 2017, and **Stephanie LaMotte** took over as **Assistant Director** in 2019. In 2022, we welcomed **Alexis Ward** as our **current Artistic Director**.



The CRC maintains **two auditioned ensembles** for members who want to sing a more challenging repertoire: The **Chester Chamber Singers** and **River Voices**. The **Chester Chamber Singers** was **established in 2003** and first became an auditioned group in 2008 under accompanist Jonathan Emmons.

River Voices was created in 2017 as a **community outreach ensemble** to bring joy to the community through a cappella choral music. The **group is available to perform** at community functions, schools and other local venues. While there is no set fee, a **donation in return for a performance** is requested. If interested, please contact River Voices director [Stephanie LaMotte](#).



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We would not be here without our **audiences!** To get the **earliest notice** of ticket availability and the **latest information** on our activities [sign up for our newsletter](#).

Holiday concert tickets will be available ~November 1. Spring concert tickets will be available at the time of the holiday concerts.

Chorale concerts are performed at the Presbyterian Church of Chestertown, 905 Gateway Drive.

Connect with us on social media to see the Chorale in action and view recordings from our past performances. **Subscribe, like and follow!**



YouTube

The **Chester River Chorale** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. [Become a patron](#) to bring the **gift of music** to the **Kent County** community. **We are grateful** for your patronage at any level!

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