



**AMERICAN FEDERATION  
PUERI CANTORES**

*The Vatican-based official student choral  
organization of the Catholic Church.*



## **2023 Pueri Cantores Festival Season**

A new year is upon us, and this Advent Season I find myself reflecting on the past year and everything 2022 brought forth. I'm happy to say that Pueri Cantores is in a drastically different position than we found ourselves for the past two years due to the pandemic, and there is *much* to be thankful for. From *finally* being able to gather our singers together again for our annual Pueri Cantores Festivals across the country, to the many generous donors, foundations, and partnerships that kept our children singing, we are eternally grateful for the abundant support our community has given us.

We at Pueri Cantores send our very best to you, along with *heartfelt gratitude* for your involvement and support of our ministry and young singers. We wish you and your loved ones a joyous, healthy, and blessed Advent and Christmas!

I hope we can look forward to having you join us for one of our 2023 Pueri Cantores Festivals.

See you in the New Year!

**Paul French, President  
American Federation Pueri Cantores**

# 2023 Pueri Cantores Festival Schedule



## **PHOENIX** Treble (grades 4-8)

Saturday, February 4th, 2023

St. Mary's Basilica, Phoenix, AZ

## **MILWAUKEE** Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, February 18th, 2023

Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Milwaukee, WI

Bishop Jeffrey R. Haines, Celebrant

## **CHICAGO** Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, February 25th, 2023

Holy Name Cathedral, Chicago, IL

Bishop Mark A. Bartosic, Celebrant

## **SOUTH FLORIDA** Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, February 25th, 2023

Ave Maria Church, Ave Maria, FL

Bishop Frank J. Dewane, Celebrant

## **SALT LAKE CITY** High School (grades 9-12)

Thursday, March 2nd - Friday, March 3rd, 2023

Cathedral of the Madeleine, Salt Lake City, UT

## **HOUSTON** High School (grades 9-12)

Saturday, March 4th, 2023

Cathedral of Our Lady of Walsingham,

Houston, TX

## **MID-ATLANTIC** Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, March 4th, 2023

Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle, Washington, DC

Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, Celebrant

## **NEW ENGLAND** Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, March 4th, 2023

Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston, MA

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, Celebrant

## **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA** Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, March 4th, 2023

Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption,

San Francisco, CA

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, Celebrant

## **FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND** Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Tuesday, March 7, 2023 (closed registration)

St. Charles Borromeo Church, Fort Wayne, IN

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, Celebrant

## **PITTSBURGH** Mixed (grades 4-12)

Saturday, March 11th, 2023

St. Paul Cathedral, Pittsburgh, PA

Bishop David A. Zubik, Celebrant

## **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA** Treble (grades 4-12)

Saturday, March 11th, 2023

St. Michael's Abbey, Silverado, CA

## **NEW YORK** Treble (grades 4-8)

Saturday, March 18th, 2023

Church of the Blessed Sacrament, New York, NY

## **HOUSTON** Treble (grades 4-12)

Saturday, March 25th, 2023

Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Houston, TX

Professional Development Credits available for participating school conductors.

Visit [www.pcchoirs.org](http://www.pcchoirs.org) for individual Festival brochures, repertoires, and additional details.



## Resources to help prepare your choir for a Pueri Cantores Festival:

- [What is Pueri Cantores, exploring the ins and outs of the festival, and instructions for choir directors to assist with festival preparation \(video\)](#)
- [MP3 practice recordings are available to help with your choir rehearsals](#)
- [FAQ about Pueri Cantores Festivals](#)
- [Five reasons to have your choir participate in a Festival](#)
- [AFPC/NCEA archived webinars for music teachers, choir directors, and worship leaders \(videos\)](#)
- [Choir organizational tips from Pueri Cantores conductor members](#)

**Hear from Youth Choir Director & AFPC Member Linda Opaleski about her experiences at Pueri Cantores Regional Festivals and the International Congress of Pueri Cantores in Rome:**



# 2023-24 Pueri Cantores Rome Congress

**Join us for the 44th Pueri Cantores International Congress in Rome December 26, 2023 - January 2, 2024!** This extraordinary week-long celebration is part pilgrimage and part choral festival that traditionally occurs every five years, bringing together Pueri Cantores choirs from around the world to participate in many thrilling liturgies and concerts. The Congress culminates with thousands of Pueri Cantores choristers singing for the Papal Mass at St. Peter's Basilica on January 1, 2024 (Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God), with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, presiding.

Click on the brochure below to learn more about the Congress and contact David O'Brien at Corporate Travel at [dobrien@ctscentral.net](mailto:dobrien@ctscentral.net) or 734-223-3348 to start planning for this once-in-a-lifetime experience!



## 44<sup>th</sup> International Congress of PUERI CANTORES

Your Choir Is Cordially Invited To Join Choirs of Young Singers From  
Around the World to Sing the Peace of God at this Extraordinary Event

*Rome & Vatican City*  
December 26, 2023–January 2, 2024



### Sistine Chapel Private Tour

Opportunity limited  
to initial registrants  
Deposit early to guarantee  
your space!



41780 W SIX MILE ROAD, SUITE 100, NORTHVILLE, MI 48168  
P 866.466.2202 | F 313.565.3621 | [CTScentral.net](http://CTScentral.net)

**Please note that in order to be admitted to the 44th Pueri Cantores International Congress, all travelers must register with Corporate Travel, the exclusive travel provider for the American Federation of Pueri Cantores.** AFPC contracts a sole travel partner for each International Congress to ensure that:

- Participants have access to all Rome Congress events
- The latest Rome Congress information from the International Federation of Pueri Cantores is efficiently and swiftly communicated to participants
- The movements of the American participants happen in a unified and safe fashion
- Congress pricing for our singers and their families is as economical as possible

## **AFPC-NCEA Webinar Series**

*for Conductors of Catholic Student Choirs, Worship Leaders and Classroom Teachers, Elementary through High School*

*Catch up on our latest webinar here:*



Engaging  
Repertoire for All  
Seasons

Classroom and Liturgy Resources to  
Enhance Feast Days and  
Parish/School Programs

Suzanne Fleming-Atwood  
BM (Univ. of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music)  
MM (Catholic University of America)

AMERICAN FEDERATION  
PUERI CANTORES

NCEA  
National Catholic Educational Association

Suzanne Fleming-Atwood

**[Click here to watch our archived AFPC-NCEA webinars.](#)**  
***Stay tuned for two more webinars coming this winter and spring!***



## Meet the Singers



*Andy R.*

*Age: 12      Years in Choir: 3*

*Choir: MJBILATE!  
St. Paul the Apostle, Grand Rapids, MI*

*What do you love about singing and being in choir?*

Getting to know and work with other people who love to sing just like I do!

*How has singing and being in choir strengthened your faith and relationship with God? How has it enriched other areas of your life?*

We sing about God a lot of the time and because of that, I learn more about the meaning of the songs we sing to glorify Him. This brings back happy memories of my whole life.

*How do you plan to involve music/choir in your future?*

I sing for the Grand Rapids Choir of Men and Boys and get better at singing all the time. We rehearse twice a week to prepare for the choral music performances in the fall, for Christmas and Easter.

*My choir and I at the  
2022 Chicago Festival!*





Kaityn B.

Age: 16

Years in Choir: 6

Choir: Regent Choral Artists & God Lead Singers  
La Reina School, Thousand Oaks, CA

*What do you love about singing and being in choir?*

I love getting to meet new people, many of which I probably wouldn't have met if it wasn't for this shared interest. Choir brings out the best in people and is a safe space for messing up and knowing you don't have to be perfect! Whenever one of us messes up a solo or part in a song we are able to just laugh it off and go upwards and onwards. Being in my choir, it feels like we are all family!

*How has singing and being in choir benefitted other areas of your life?*

Within my academics and day-to-day life, being in choir has helped me stay on track and be productive. It has helped me learn how to prioritize certain school work and how to make the best use of my time.

*Why do you enjoy participating in Pueri Cantores Festivals?*

I really enjoyed participating in the 2022 Southern California Festival because I got to meet so many new people and friends from schools, both far and near. It was also very fulfilling to finally hear the combined choirs singing together the music that everyone had been rehearsing with their own choirs for many months.

*How do you plan to involve music/choir in your future?*

I plan to join choir at whatever college I decide to go to. Hopefully I'll also be able to have a small keyboard with me to still keep my hobby of piano playing in my life.

[Click here to sign up your child to be featured in a future AFPC newsletter.](#)

## Choir Organizational Tip

As I reflect on important organizational tips that have proved helpful and successful in my parish and Cathedral ministry with youth choirs, I find three pillars especially important.

- **Plan and prepare quality sacred music repertoire** from plainchant through the modern era with your youth choirs, while taking an opportunity to renew your Sunday assemblies' participation in sung prayer through Christ-centered, profound hymnody and service music. When we were compiling suggested repertoire for the "Lauda Anima Real Music for Catholic School Culture and Devotion" project while serving as the Director of Music at the Cathedral of Saint Raymond Nonnatus in the Diocese of Joliet in Illinois, we examined the recommendations of the US bishops in *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* (2007) while discerning the treasures of our Roman Catholic sacred music tradition that would incorporate more fully the youth into the liturgical life of the entire Church. This repertoire included plainchant and traditional hymnody, including hymnody that could be adapted for multicultural liturgical celebrations in English and Spanish (for example, "Lift High the Cross" / "Alcen la Cruz").
- **Model great choral singing through championing musical excellence** with your parishes' other choirs while striving for robust congregational singing as well. Planning and preparing quality choral repertoire using superior technique and musicianship inspires the vocation of sacred music within your faith communities. Cultivating a strong culture of prayer and liturgy is essential for nurturing vocations while serving as a vehicle for evangelization in the modern world.
- **Strengthening communal and personal prayer lives** allows us to be open to the Holy Spirit in our ministries. For me, I find great spiritual comfort and fortitude in praying the Liturgy of the Hours. Other colleagues have shared with me their joy in *Lectio Divina* in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Certainly, beginning and ending every rehearsal with prayer is intrinsic to the ministry to which we have been called by Jesus Christ. Praying with choral texts, particularly with quality translations of texts in Latin and other languages, creates more personal, profound meanings while animating the musical potential for our choirs. I have found it spiritually enriching for choristers and other liturgical ministers to have an additional day focused on spiritual formation as part of their yearly schedules as well.

May God bless us in our ministries during these holy seasons of Advent and Christmas as well as in the New Year!

*Choir Organizational Tip brought to you by James Grzadzinski  
Director of Music and Liturgy, Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Milwaukee, WI*



## Pueri Cantores Alumni Spotlight



It is hard for me to believe that only ten years ago the Fort-Wayne South Bend Pueri Cantores Festival became my first choral experience and the first time I began developing my vocal instrument. I was immediately attracted to the complex and full sound of such an ensemble and began participating in choirs frequently following that.

A few years after my first Pueri Cantores Festival, I was part of a children's choir associated with the Crypt Church of Notre Dame directed by J. J. Wright, an experience that strengthened my singing skills and was made possible by my involvement in Pueri Cantores. The knowledge and music I learned from Pueri Cantores were invaluable to me as I became involved in parish choirs near my home as well as the Diocesan Choir of the Diocese of Gary. The repertoire itself also provided a much-needed source of quality music for the Catholic Liturgy, something I feel very passionately about.

I recently graduated from Kolbe Academy, an online homeschooling program based in the Classics. I began attending The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. studying Music Composition at the university's Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, Drama, and Art led by Dean Dr. Jacqueline Leary-Warsaw, a board member of the American Federation of Pueri Cantores. For my ensemble credits I joined the University Choir, which has led to what I regard to be the culmination of my ensemble experience: participating in the university's annual Christmas Concert with the Choir and University Orchestra, recorded by EWTN. This has been a massively rewarding experience, and I plan to participate in the Choir for the foreseeable future.

Additionally, the familiarity with the choral ensemble that Pueri Cantores gave me has made me, I believe, a better composer. Over the course of my vocal development, I made my way through every choral part, from a high soprano to a low bass. This has given me firsthand experience with each vocal part, allowing me to hear the inner voices much more clearly and helping along my understanding of harmony and orchestration. Finally, my training has come full-circle, as I have begun more frequently writing choral works based on all the experience I've amassed from choirs, beginning with Pueri Cantores. I

cannot thank God enough for putting Pueri Cantores in my life, and for all the training, development, and experience I have gained from it.

-Aidan Feeney, Music Composition Student, Benjamin T. Rome School of Music Drama, and Art, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. & Pueri Cantores Alumnus Singer 2012+

*Are you a Pueri Cantores Alumnus Singer? Email [info@pcchoirs.org](mailto:info@pcchoirs.org) to let us know what you are up to and to join our alumni network!*

## Featured Choir



### **Saint Bede Youth Choir, Williamsburg, VA**

The Youth Choir of Saint Bede Catholic Church in the colonial capital of Williamsburg, Virginia was established in 2012 and now includes nearly 70 youth grades 1 through 12. The three choirs -Young Choristers, Junior Choristers, and

Senior Choristers- gather for prayer each week and then separate for individual choir rehearsals. The full Youth Choir sings and rings twice a month at Sunday Mass. The choir is under the direction of Aaron Renninger, director of liturgy and music for the parish. In addition to vocal music, all Junior and Senior Choristers work with handbells and choir chimes under the leadership of Carina Brackin, associate director of music. Handbells are played for all service music outside of Advent and Lent, as well as a solo bell piece each Mass. The Young Choristers learn basics of music and rhythm under the guidance of Emily Rosenberger, one of the parish choral scholars.

The various levels of the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) serve as the principal criteria for music instruction each year. When ready, students are encouraged to test to advance in the RSCM levels. Successful completion of the written and aural tests earn the student a new color ribbon to hold their medal of Saint Nicholas. The youngest choristers learn solfege through the Ward Method. All choristers learn about their faith through Catholic liturgical catechesis. Students earn coins for participation in Mass and rehearsals, and answering questions in rehearsals (choral, music theory, or liturgical). They redeem these plastic coins for small gifts, toys, or gift cards at the end of the year pizza party.

During COVID when group singing wasn't permitted, the choir continued to safely meet in-person for handbells and music theory education. Several students also participated concurrently online for instruction. Saint Bede Church does not have its own school but includes children roughly 1/3 each of local parochial Catholic school, homeschool, and public school students.

In addition to leading the music at the 11am Mass every other Sunday September through May, the Saint Bede Youth Choir is responsible for all music (choral and handbell) for a Mass on Christmas Eve, Easter Sunday, and First Communion. They also join with various other ensembles and choirs of the parish for Confirmation and the popular annual Advent Lessons and Carols service. The oldest students in the choir announce and lead the singing of the hymns as cantor training. The Junior and Senior Choristers eagerly look forward to participating in the 2023 Pueri Cantores Mid-Atlantic Festival next March at the Cathedral of Saint Matthew in Washington, DC. This will be their third Pueri Cantores Festival, and they are very excited!

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# #GIVINGTUESDAY

*Together  
we raised*

**\$21,545**

We are overwhelmed with gratitude by the way our community came together to show us support!

*A special message from some of our singers...*



**Thank you again for supporting Pueri Cantores this #GivingTuesday. This global day of giving comes around once a year, but you can support Pueri Cantores year-round by becoming a Monthly Sustainer:**

# Join our Monthly Sustainers Program!



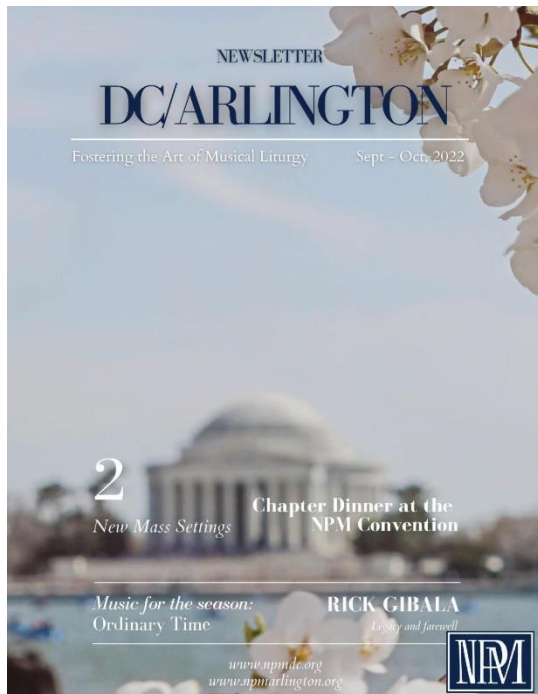
AFPC's mission is to **educate and evangelize young Catholics across the U.S through sacred music**, thereby cultivating their passion for the arts, nurturing their personal and spiritual wellbeing, and developing a relationship with God and the Church that they will carry all their lives.


AFPC's work is made possible through the support of individuals like you who see the value in this apostolate and are committed to seeing it continue. **Please prayerfully consider becoming a Monthly Sustainer** to help us enrich the lives of thousands of children and families for years to come.

[Click here to become a Monthly Sustainer](#)


**Or make a one-time end of year donation here**

## Pueri Cantores in the Media





### Do You Hear the Children Sing?



For the past two years, choirs have had to decrease or stop all together. During that time, our children have kept growing. The 5th graders who were in children's choir in 2020 are now in 7th grade, and the high school cantors are now graduated and entering college. They need the experience of singing together, learning our rich Catholic heritage of songs, and participating in something greater than themselves for the Lord. While sports teams and outdoor activities could remain, singing within the church was stifled during the most formative years of your children's growth. It is something that needs attention NOW if we wish to have singers in the future. I hope you will consider having a youth or children's choir for your parish so your youngest parishioners can experience the true depth of their potential in music.

Our parish used to have a Children's Choir for lower grades and a Youth Choir for our teens B.C. (Before Covid). A new design and a membership with the Federation of Pueri Cantores will be re-introduced for our parish. Pueri Cantores is the official student choral organization of the Catholic Church. It will be a time of growth for our youngest

members, but a time of leadership for our middle school and high school members with a combined youth choir of Grade 4-12. We will have the opportunity to sing at seasonal Masses for Jesus the Good Shepherd, but also ultimately at the Cathedral of St. Matthew with other youth from our Archdiocese of Washington in the Pueri Cantores Festival. Please consider having a Youth Choir represented in this event from your parish. I found the website and video on how to prepare your choir for a Pueri Cantores Festival particularly useful. The Federation also put me in touch with another local director who helped ease my concerns and trust within the organization. I will be working specifically with singers this year in crafting our next generation of performers and worship leaders. If you would like to participate in the Mid-Atlantic Youth Choral Festival on March 4, 2023, [here are the details](#). I hope the fruits of these labors will continue into adult singers and participants of the greater Catholic church for years to come.

- Katie Evans, Jesus the Good Shepherd  
Catholic Church, Owings MD

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# Opportunities from The National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM)

## Winter Colloquium in Washington, D.C.

NPM is offering a 3-day workshop and retreat for its Premium Members. The topic, "Can Beauty Save Us? Liturgical Explorations" will be presented by Dr. Don E. Saliers, Candler School of Theology Theologian-in-Residence (Emory University, Atlanta, GA). Join fellow Directors of Music in this 3-day event, taking place at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle (Washington, D.C.).



2023 WINTER  
*Colloquium*  
CAN BEAUTY SAVE US?

January 16-18, 2023 | [www.npm.org](http://www.npm.org)



46TH ANNUAL NPM NATIONAL CONVENTION

## Walking with the Saints

JULY 10-14, 2023 • RENO, NEVADA | JULY 18-20, 2023 • VIRTUALLY

## Upcoming 2023 Convention

Part of NPM's 2023 National Convention (Reno, Nevada, July 10-14, 2023) will include excellent opportunities for the choral director and singer! Breakout sessions will include tips for new choir directors, how to most effectively direct children's choirs, and more. Concerts include Chanticleer as well as other exciting liturgical and musical opportunities. Can't join in person? A virtual convention option will be available.

## NPM Offers New 30-Day Membership Trial

An NPM membership is a powerful opportunity for networking, career advancement, and resources to directly support the national sacred music community. To help you experience what NPM has to offer, we are offering a free 30-day trial. Learn more by scanning the QR code in the image.



Learn more about these opportunities with NPM at [www.npm.org](http://www.npm.org).



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