



# ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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## MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As we look toward the conclusion of this challenging and difficult year, we want to offer everyone our warmest greetings for the holiday season. We are thankful for the many blessings we have received in the midst of this pandemic—the joy of being able to meet every week, at least via Zoom; the many ways we continue to learn and grow as a community; and for the many donors who have supported us this year.



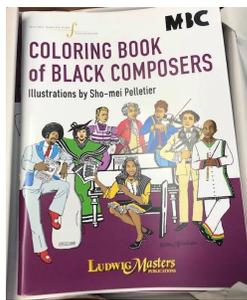
## CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES

Congratulations to our first head chorister, Michael Robinson, (left) who completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree at William Paterson University this fall. In addition, six of our choristers graduated from elementary, middle, and high school. *Congratulations to all our graduates!*

## CONGRATULATIONS, 2020 CHOIR SCHOOL GRADUATES!



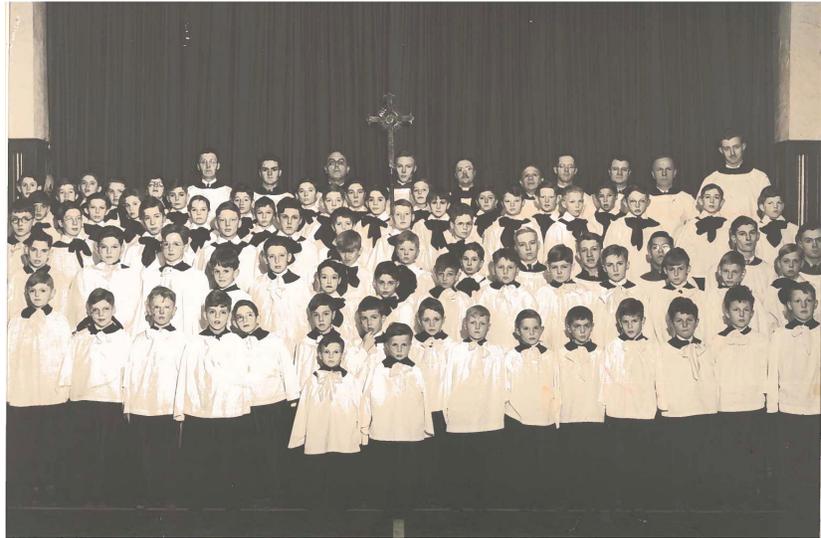
## A LOOK AT THE YEAR IN PICTURES



## 1944: MY BEST CHRISTMAS

by Hugh Mitchell, former St Paul's Chorister, 1941-1949

It was shortly before Christmas, 1944 during World War II when wounded American soldiers were returning from the Battle of the Bulge to convalesce at Camp Shanks, thirty miles north of New York City. I had just turned 10 years old and was a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church Boys' Choir in Englewood. The US Army Chaplain had arranged with Mr. Henderson, our much-loved choirmaster, to transport us up to the camp to cheer the soldiers by an evening of Christmas carols and hymns. I will never forget it.



Our "Choir Mothers" helped to dress us in our traditional black cassock and white surplice with those silly black floppy bow ties we all hated. We were then lined up in the back of a gigantic dark auditorium, and each boy was given a candle to light his hymnal. The long processional started with singing (mostly from memory):

*Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.*

I was aware of passing row after row of soldiers. We continued to sing:

*Mild He lays his glory by, Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.*

It seemed like we'd never reach the stage, but finally we got there singing the last lines,

*Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace,  
Hail, the Son of righteousness!*

The lights went up to reveal an amazing sight. In front of us was an assembly of perhaps a thousand soldiers, many of them bandaged, in robes or wheelchairs, openly weeping.

I had been raised to believe that brave soldiers never cry, but here were grown veterans, wounded in war, crying. It was so touching that I, too, wanted to cry. And perhaps part of my emotion was the sudden shattering of one of the mythologies of war. Brave soldiers do cry!

I will never forget that evening of carols. As the long war was raged to its horrendous conclusion—it was the best Christmas I was ever lucky enough to be part of. Perhaps we had touched the deep desire for peace kindled in the hearts of those wounded soldiers who had so recently experienced the horrors and pains of war. I know it touched my lifelong desire for peace.

—Hugh Mitchell, Rochester, N.Y.