



ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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CHECK OUT OUR LATEST NEWS

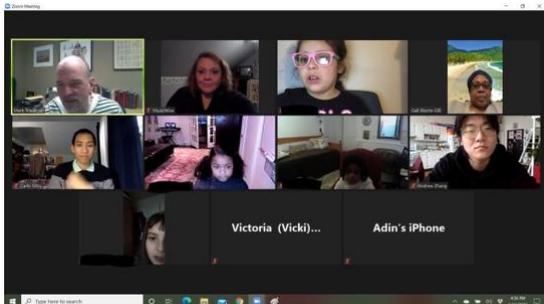
The St. Paul's Choir School continues to meet weekly, and our choristers continue to make music as well as progress in piano and voice lessons. Take a moment to see what we have been doing and think about ways you can help be a part of this exciting ministry of education and outreach!

THE MISSION OF THE ST. PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL:

Making Music, Building Community, Changing Lives

The St. Paul's Choir School is a Musical and Educational Outreach of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Englewood, New Jersey. We seek to—

- ✓ *Provide solid musical instruction in a friendly and fun environment of mutual respect and achievement;*
- ✓ *Create opportunities for children to grow in musical and spiritual strengths that nurture their growth;*
- ✓ *Provide children of diverse abilities and backgrounds with a program of music appreciation and choral performance that seeks to fulfill each child's musical potential.*



MONDAYS AND PARTNERSHIPS

We meet via Zoom on Mondays to check in, talk about special topics, and occasionally welcome guests. This past year we have welcomed composer Joel Thompson, former Abyssinian Baptist Church Music Minister Jim Davis, Harlem artist Tash Neal, Pastor Mack Brandon, and composer Dionne McClain-Freeney. We have entered into a partnership with the chorister program at

St. Paul and Incarnation in Jersey City (Gail Blache-Gill, director) and Grace Church in Newark. Choristers from these programs are also able to take piano and voice lessons through our Choir School. As we approach the middle of our ninth year, we are excited to welcome these talented young choristers!

TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY GATHERINGS

Some of our choristers continue to meet in small, distanced groups in the Parish Hall on Tuesday (advanced) and Wednesday (probationers) using hand chimes to perform. Four new choristers have arrived this year in addition to our four new choristers from last spring! We are learning to compose melodies and have begun to consider the harmonic implications in them—

the Advanced Choristers have begun learning college-level music theory, such as secondary dominant chords! We also learned how to sing *Happy Birthday* using *sofège* syllables (do, re, mi, etc.). Many thanks to the Cove Point Foundation for providing funding for the purchase of hand chimes!





COMPOSER DIONNE McCLAIN FRENEY JOINS US

Dionne McClain Freney is a pianist, composer, lyricist, choral and musical director, arranger, singer. Her teaching artist’s credits include appearances here and abroad. Her award-winning compositions and arrangements (New York Philharmonic, NYMF, GLAAD Media Award nominee) include *Going Home: A Movement of Voices* (with Allison Sniffin), *The Movie Star and The Mammy*, and much more. She has also provided arrangements and musical direction for *Theater Breaking Through Barriers* and *Piper Theatre*. She is also a composer in the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater

Workshop. Ms. McClain Freney will join us via Zoom on March 15 to discuss composition and the creative process and her career as a young Black female composer.

RECORDING PROJECTS

Some of the choristers were able to gather together to record pieces for Advent and Christmas services and events. Even though we were masked and socially distant, the choristers were grateful to be singing again! We also welcomed a number of our chorister graduates home from college.

We recorded all of the “O” *Antiphons* for the end of Advent (right, top), and several carols and anthems for Christmas. We recorded Moses Hogan’s *I Am His Child* for broadcast at St. Luke’s in Darien, CT for their annual Martin Luther King Sunday service and Englewood’s annual Martin Luther King service at Ebenezer Baptist Church (right, below). Our chorister Dorian recorded *Precious Lord* for the Absalom Jones Service for the Episcopal Diocese of Newark.

In addition, our choristers Dorian, Lyric, Maggie, and our graduate Michael have sung for regular Sunday morning services. Our chorister Dorian recorded “Jesus Christ is risen today” for the Episcopal Diocese of Newark’s Easter video. Be sure to check out our recordings on Facebook: www.facebook.com/stpaulschoirschoolenglewood and Instagram [@stpaulsings4nj](https://www.instagram.com/stpaulsings4nj).



OUR FIRST COLLEGE GRADUATE

Our first head chorister Michael Robinson earned his Bachelor’s degree in Communications and Theatre from William Paterson University in December 2020. He is currently studying acting privately and working a part-time job. Michael was able to sing for our second service on Christmas Eve—the picture (far right, below) was taken after the service, and the picture in the background was painted by Michael at the Massachusetts RSCM course in the summer of 2014. Michael has also come back to sing at St. Paul’s on occasional Sundays and continues to serve as a mentor to some of our current choristers.



SCHEDULING

- Monday: 4:30 p.m., Zoom call (online)
- Tuesday: 4:30-5:15 p.m., Advanced (optional in-person, masks and distancing required)
- Wednesday: 4:30-5 p.m., Elementary (optional in-person, masks and distancing required)

Through lessons, calls, Zoom meetings, and in-person meetings, we have sought to provide a structure of learning and community for our choristers and their families. Our choristers continue with Zoom lessons with **Giulia Utz** (voice), **Andrew Zhang** (piano), and our intern **Carlo Sitoy** joins us for Zoom and in-person meetings. Check out our webpage at www.stpauls-choirschool.org and like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/stpaulschoirschoolenglewood and Instagram [@stpaulsings4nj](https://www.instagram.com/stpaulsings4nj).



FUNDING AND GIFTS

In January, we received a generous gift from the Ina J. Samuels-Martínez Foundation allowing us to secure our funding for staffing this year. Ms. Samuels-Martínez was a longtime parishioner at St. Paul's, and we are truly grateful for this wonderful gift honoring her important legacy of love and leadership in our community.

During Covid-19 we have helped connect families to emergency community resources such as meals, utility assistance, and internet connectivity. We continue to help ensure our students have access to the academic support and career-focused guidance needed now and well after this crisis is over. We strive to give children the skills, agency and confidence to pursue and achieve their goals.

“Out-of-school time” describes both after-school hours and summer months—those critical times when students need the most guidance. It is estimated that children lost more than 35% of in-person, direct instruction during the last school year. Since March 2020 we have met year-round, offering academic support, tutoring, mentoring, and professional music education. We also continue to be in touch with our graduates, offering them mentoring and support. We continue to create a supportive culture of responsibility and character building that translates to our 100% high school graduation rate and creates opportunities for college.



HOW CAN I HELP?

Your support thus far has empowered our program to continue as a lifeline to our choristers during this difficult time. Checks in any amount are always welcome, and all gifts are tax-deductible. Send your gift to St. Paul's Church, 113 Engle Street, Englewood, NJ 07631; please write in the memo line **St. Paul's Choir School**.

Thank you for your support of the St Paul's Choir School. Your gifts and extraordinary support continue to make a difference in the lives of our children and our community, and we are grateful indeed. Feel free to contact me (mtrautman@stpaulsenglewood.org) at any time to find out more about how you can be a part of this important outreach.

—Mark A. Trautman, Director of Music