

## **Why I Am a Choir Member**

To be honest, I didn't really have a choice: I was born into a musical family. As a teenager, my mother sang in a gospel quartet with her three sisters on "The Radio Bible Class," a radio program where their father was the preacher. And not to be outdone, my dad wrote a commercial love ballad which was published and recorded. After marrying, they both also sang in their church choir. The first songs I learned from them were, Jesus Loves Me, Jesus Loves the Little Children, and Twinkle, twinkle little star. Music would always be a focal point in my life.

In high school and college I played in the school bands and orchestras and for three years was the featured singer for the Serenaders, an East Coast dance band. I knew then that whatever I did for a living had to include time for music.

In 1962 my wife and I moved to Louisville and began looking for a church home. We visited three or four but didn't feel welcome or comfortable with them. Then one Sunday morning we stayed home and watched a service on TV. We found a channel where a choir was singing, and when they finished, our search was over. It was the Deer Park choir led by Peggy Trimble. After hearing the sermon message by Carman Sharp, and the congregational singing, we decided Baptists, at least at Deer Park, knew how to worship. We visited the following Sunday and joined soon thereafter.

In the fifty plus years since, it has been a blessing to be directed by Peggy Trimble, Gene Love, Ron and Sandra Turner, and Albin Whitworth. Each lived and shared their love for God and the church, which enhanced the music they led. Membership in the choir also changed through the years. Adapting and blending with the new voices only adds to the joy of singing and to the music being sung.

What adds to my musical satisfaction is that each director brings and shares his or her own unique approach to the presentation of music. Just as church doors should be open to all for worship, so should church choirs be open and able to embrace the gifts of both its directors and members. The Deer Park choir continues to flourish by welcoming all who love to sing.

I no longer sing as well or hold notes as long as I once did; the high and low notes are getting more difficult to hit; but so long as I can walk to the choir loft, carry a tune, and love to sing, Deer Park will be my church home and its choir will be my musical family. Come join us and share the love.

Al Rickert