Schola Cantorum

2026-2027 Customary



Mount Olive Lutheran Church & Christian Day School

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

✢ *Psallam spiritu et mente* ✢

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✢ *Psallam spiritu et mente* ✢

"I will sing with the Spirit and with understanding." *1 Corinthians 14:15*



Purpose

The *Schola Cantorum* exists to give young musicians an exceptional musical experience in the context of the church's liturgical life and to cultivate lifelong musicians for service in the church. Choristers are trained as young musicians, while being given an opportunity to sing wonderful repertoire and to grow in their Christian faith and Lutheran identity. This experience gives each chorister the opportunity for significant spiritual and personal growth. Participation in the *Schola Cantorum* also develops the choristers' self-discipline, resilience, focus, sense of responsibility and commitment, and strengthens each of their abilities to work with their peers.

The *Schola Cantorum* is a ministry of Mount Olive Lutheran Church. There is no tuition charged for participating in this musical ensemble. The *Schola Cantorum* is open to any child between the ages of eight and fourteen who 1) can match pitch accurately, 2) can commit to the rehearsal and service schedule, and 3) for boys – have not begun their voice change. Membership in the choir is open to all children and youth who can make the scheduling commitment.

About the Choir's Name

Schola Cantorum is a Latin title that literally translates to *singer's school.* The choir originated in the 7th century.[1] It was a choir school run by the church, often monasteries, to teach boys to read music and sing for the purpose of singing the liturgy at services. The purpose of the *Schola Cantorum* at Mount Olive is to train young musicians for musical service in the church, so this name is quite fitting for our purpose here at Mount Olive Lutheran Church.

Chorister and Chorister Family Commitment

Each chorister and his or her family make an annual commitment to Mount Olive Lutheran Church, fellow choristers, the music staff, and above all, to serving our Lord in His temple. **An annual schedule is provided so that families can plan accordingly.** For the choir to carry out its ministry in the church this commitment must be taken seriously by both the chorister and his or her family. In addition, this is most certainly a transferable life skill that will serve them well throughout their entire life. Commitment from every chorister's family ensures that the choir will be able to serve our Lord with beautiful praise and proclamation. It also ensures that each chorister will benefit fully from this exceptional musical experience. Choristers who demonstrate commitment along with musical development will advance "up the ranks" in the program as they mature. First year choristers may "try it out" for a month before making a commitment for

[1] Carl Schalk, ed.: *Key Words in Church Music, Revised and Enlarged*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. 2004. Page 103.

the year. At the end of the month trial the director, the chorister, and his/her family will decide if the fit is a good one and the time is right.

Chorister Expectations

Choristers will approach their musical service to the church with professionalism, maturity, and sincerity. They will apply themselves and give their best effort to the musical tasks set before them. They will interact with the music staff, fellow choristers, congregation members, and community members with respect at all times. They will care for their music and vestments appropriately. They will take care of the church and school facilities. Choristers who lack the maturity to handle these responsibilities or who fail to show respect to all may be asked to leave the choir.

Parent and Guardian Expectations

Parents and guardians are expected to support their chorister(s) by insuring that they are present for rehearsals, present and well rested for services, and by encouraging and supporting their musical and spiritual development. Parents and guardians are encouraged to volunteer for listed parent duties as their schedule allows.

Supporting the *Schola Cantorum*

Individuals are invited to provide support for the *Schola Cantorum* through their financial generosity. The *Schola Cantorum* fund exists to provide the means to launch, strengthen, and maintain this children's choir program. Funds from this account support the endeavors and projects of the program not covered in the congregation's annual budget. All financial gifts are tax deductible and are acknowledged on quarterly giving statements for church members or annually for non-members. The program is a ministry of the congregation; the choristers' families pay no tuition.

Attendance

Weekly rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 3:15 p.m. to 4:40 p.m. This rehearsal schedule permits students to participate in the athletic program at Mount Olive Christian Day School. **It is expected that this weekly rehearsal take precedent over all other extra-curricular activities.** Scheduling conflicts and absences for games will be negotiated with the school Athletic Director. It is assumed that if a chorister is at school he or she will be available for the weekly rehearsal. There are also a few extraordinary rehearsals scheduled throughout the year. Choristers sing on average eight to ten services a year at Mount Olive Lutheran Church. Choristers earn five points for each rehearsal; ten points for each service. Annual point totals are used to calculate eligibility for earning the surplice and medals. Tardiness or early departures result in a deduction of total points.

Rehearsal Day Logistics

- Choristers enrolled at Mount Olive Christian Day School will be dismissed by their homeroom teachers for rehearsal. Other choristers should enter the building through door S2 (from the kindergarten playground).

- All choristers are dismissed at 4:30 p.m. through door N1 (the school doors on Washington Boulevard). Choristers who are not picked up by 4:50 p.m. will be sent to childcare at the expense of the parents.
- Parents/guardians must enter the facility for early pickup via school (N1) or church (W3) office. Early pickups are discouraged.

Service Day Logistics

- Choristers are to be vested in cassock (and surplice) and ready to rehearse 30 minutes before the service in the Music Room.
- Choristers sit in the loft for the entire service. Choristers will be dismissed at the conclusion of the service. Parents may pick them up in the music room or choristers may find their parents in the church, parlor, etc. when their vestments are hung up and their music put away. Choristers may not leave a service early.
- Please notify the director if children will be going home with someone other than a parent or guardian.
- Parents are asked to not to take pictures or video the choristers singing in church.

Dress Code for Rehearsal Days

- Choristers may wear their *Schola Cantorum* polo shirt on rehearsal days when school is in session.

Dress Code for Services

- Choristers should be dressed comfortably but neatly for services. School uniforms are appropriate, as are shirts and ties for boys and skirts and blouses or dresses for girls.
- Dress shoes are preferred rather than athletic shoes.
- Girls must wear flats soled shoes, absolutely no high heels.
- No flip flops. If sandals are worn they must fit securely on the feet.
- Because choristers wear vestments over their clothing, they may want to wear short sleeves. Shorts are acceptable in warmer weather.
- Please note that the dress code is intended to help choristers remain comfortable under their vestments at services and to minimize any hazards (*flip flops or high heels + cassock + steps = crashing chorister*).

Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices

- **All electronic devices are prohibited at all times.** This includes, but is not limited to, mobile phones, smart watches, audio devices, headphones, and video games. Phones may be turned in to the director upon arrival and will be returned at the conclusion of the rehearsal. Choristers should not bring electronic devices for services.
- Choristers may use the phone in the music room with permission of an adult to phone a parent or guardian in extraordinary circumstances.

Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

- Menus for chorister events will be published in advance. Choristers with specific food allergies or dietary restrictions are asked to bring a substitute or packed snack / lunch / dinner.
- Beverages will be limited to water, milk, or 100% juice. Absolutely no soda, caffeine, energy drinks, etc.
- Choristers with food allergies or dietary restrictions may keep a "stash" of non-perishable snacks in the music room for occasions when snacks are offered to choristers.

Safe Church Environment

- Choristers must arrive during specified time window for *Schola Cantorum* events.
- Parents and guardians must provide names of adults who may pick their choristers up from *Schola Cantorum* events. Parents may do this on the annual *Chorister Information Form* or by written notice. Adults unknown to church staff may be asked to provide photo I.D.
- Choristers will be under the supervision of an adult at all times.
- A minimum of two adults will be on campus for all *Schola Cantorum* events.
- All music staff will have background checks.
- The director has successfully completed *Safeguarding God's Children* through the Royal School of Church Music in America. The purpose of this training is to provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for children.
- The director has successfully completed First Aid and CPR training.

Chorister Progress Reports

Chorister progress reports are completed in January each year. In addition to giving general information on each chorister's growth as an individual musician this evaluation allows parents to track attendance points so that absences and/or tardiness do not prohibit a chorister from earning (and maintaining) their surplice or the medals. Parents and guardians are encouraged to "check-in" on their child's progress at any point throughout the year. Parents are welcome to schedule a conference with the director at any time.

Communication

- The director will send out e-mail reminders as needed. All individuals who provide e-mail addresses on the *Chorister Enrollment Form* will be included in the e-distribution list. If you wish to be removed from the list simply send your request to the director.
- Parents and guardians may contact the director by phone: **414.774.2200**, ext. **112**.
- Parents and guardians may contact the director by e-mail: **stephen.rosebrock@mtolivemke.org**.
- Parents and guardians may make an appointment for a meeting at a mutually agreeable time.
- The director's personal mobile phone is on silent during all *Schola* activities as well as services and school days. Texting is *not* a reliable way to communicate.

Affiliation

The *Schola Cantorum* is affiliated with the Royal School of Church Music in America and utilizes its *Voice for Life* (*VfL*) training series as the core of its curriculum. The Royal School of Church Music is an international and pan-denominational organization whose purpose is to promote the training of choristers and for the provision of music and other training related materials.

Voice for Life in Detail

Voice for Life is a five stage training scheme for training choristers. In choir lingo it is often referred to as a "graded choir." Academic grades are not given, rather it is a reference to graduated, or steps. It is a series comprised of five levels:

1. Surplice Award (White Level)
2. Light Blue Medal Award
3. Dark Blue Medal Award
4. Red Medal Award
5. Yellow Medal Award

Each level has specific content and musical skills that the chorister must master. When a chorister completes the White Level he or she is awarded the surplice, the white vestment worn over the cassock. The four succeeding levels have medals to be worn over the surplice designating the chorister's accomplishments. Choristers complete a level, or rather how it is more commonly said, *earn their surplice* or *earn their medal* by completing a written and singing exam administered by the director during Eastertide.

Parents should note that choristers move at their own pace up through the levels. While nearly every chorister will earn their surplice, it is not to be assumed that every chorister will earn all four medals. It is also not required that they take the exams. Some choristers want to sing for simple enjoyment, others enjoy the self-competition and climbing the ranks. Also, earning all four medals may extend beyond a chorister's time in the *Schola Cantorum* at Mount Olive.

In addition there are three international exams a chorister may take, the *RSCM Bronze Award,* the *RSCM Silver Award*, and the *RSCM Gold Award*. The *Bronze* exam is taken after the chorister has completed their *Dark Blue* exam, the *Silver* after the *Red,* and the *Gold* after the *Yellow*. A certified RSCM examiner administers these exams by private appointment. More information is available from the director or at **rscmamerica.org**.

Earning the Surplice and Medals

Until a chorister earns his or her surplice they are considered a *novice*. Once he or she has earned the surplice they are considered a "full" member of the choir. Surplices and medals are awarded on Ascension Day each year to choristers who have met the attendance requirement and passed the exam. Exams are scheduled during Eastertide. A parent or guardian sits in on the exam with their chorister. Medal exams cost $15.00; checks should be made payable to Mount Olive Lutheran Church and should accompany the exam reservation form. The surplice exam is administered without charge.

Surplice Award (White Level)

Commitment, Formation & Character

- **200 Attendance Points (out of 250 possible points)**
- Makes a positive contribution to the choir
- Demonstrates independence
- Demonstrates maturity, responsibility, and good behavior at rehearsals, services, and other events
- Maintains focus during rehearsals
- Recites the Nicene Creed in unison with the choir
- Uses *Lutheran Service Book* independently throughout the service
- Independently recites the Lord's Prayer (see page 14)
- Independently recites the Choristers' Prayer (see page 14)

Vocabulary

- *Barline*: A line dividing one measure from the next
- *Beam:* A beam joining together eighth notes
- *Beat*: Music is divided into units called beats
- *Clef*: A sign at the beginning of a staff showing the range of notes used on the staff
- *Conductor:* Someone who directs your choir in rehearsal and performances
- *Double Barline*: A double line showing the end of a piece or section of a piece
- *Dynamics*: Instructions that tell musicians how loud or quiet music should be
- *Humming*: Creating a pitch with the lips closed together lightly
- *Measure*: Written music is divided into measures; each measure contains a certain number of beats
- *Part:* The line of music followed by each singer
- *Pitch:* How high or low notes are
- *Posture:* How we sit or stand
- *Range:* The distance between the highest and lowest notes you can sing
- *Repeats:* Signs in music telling you to sing a section more than once
- *Rest*: A sign that indicates silence in a piece of music
- *Rhythm*: A pattern of long and short notes
- *Soprano*: The highest voice in a choir
- *Staff:* The set of five horizontal lines on which music is written
- *Treble Clef*: A sign at the beginning of a staff, which indicates that the music contains high notes
- *Upbeat:* The last beat in a measure

Musical Skill & Literacy

- Uses appropriate posture, both sitting and standing
- Holds music appropriately
- Watches and follows the conductor at appropriate times
- Sing a D Major scale independently using solfège syllables (*do*, *re*, *mi*, etc.) without piano accompaniment

- Identify between high and low pitches, both aurally and on the staff
- Sing back a simple musical pattern between *do* and *la*
- Keeps time either by clapping or tapping foot
- Demonstrates excellent singing using a portion of a *Lutheran Service Book* Divine Service setting
- Demonstrates excellent singing using stanza one of the hymn *"Jesus, Greatest at the Table"* (*LSB 446*) with piano accompaniment (see page 15)
- Is able to locate excerpts by measure number and/or page number; is able to identify their voice part in a multi-part score
- Understands these musical symbols: repeats, breath marks, and fermatas
- Understands these musical terms: crescendo and diminuendo (decrescendo)
- Identify singer's part in the score

Light Blue Medal

Commitment, Formation & Character

- **205 Attendance Points (out of 250 possible points)**
- Consistently makes a positive contribution to the choir
- Consistently demonstrates independence and leadership
- Consistently demonstrates maturity, responsibility, and good behavior at rehearsals, services, and other events
- Independently recites the Nicene Creed (see page 14)

Vocabulary

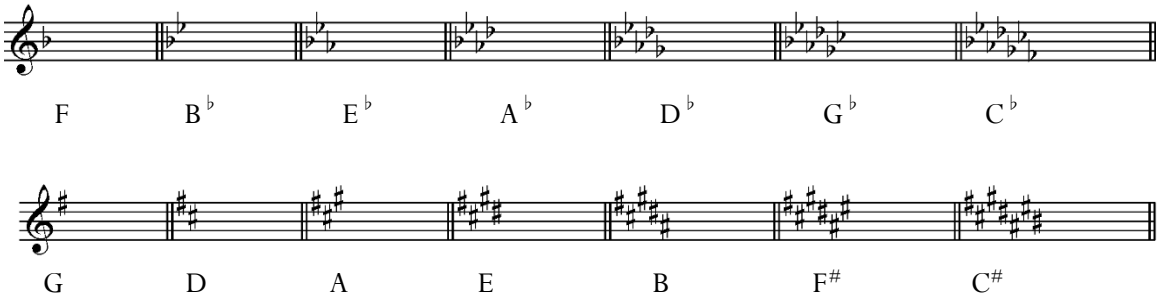
- *Accidental*: A sign placed in front of a note, indicating that its pitch is to be altered
- *Arranger*: The person who creates a different version of an existing piece of music
- *Barline*: A line dividing one measure from the next
- *Bass Clef*: A sign at the start of a staff showing that the music contains low notes
- *Beat*: Music is divided into units called beats
- *Choir*: A coordinated group of singers
- *Clef*: A sign at the beginning of a staff showing the range of notes used on the staff
- *Composer*: The person who writes a piece of music
- *Consonants*: All the letters of the alphabet except A, E, I, O and U
- *Diction*: The way words are pronounced and expressed
- *Double Barline*: A double line showing the end of a piece or section of a piece
- *Dynamics*: Instructions that tell musicians how loud or quiet music should be
- *Eighth Note*: A short note, the same length as a half a quarter note
- *Flat*: A sign indicating that a note is to be made a half step lower
- *Half Note*: A note that lasts the length of two quarter notes
- *Half Step*: In music, the smallest interval between two notes
- *Key*: A selection of notes, taken from a scale, around which a piece of music is based

- *Key Signature*: Signs (sharps or flats) at the start of a piece that indicates its key
- *Larynx*: The voice box (in the neck), which produces vocal sounds
- *Measure*: Written music is divided into measures; each measure contains a certain number of beats
- *Natural Sign*: The "ordinary" letter name version of a note – not a sharp or flat
- *Octave*: The interval between one note and the next one of the same name above or below it
- *Posture*: How we sit or stand
- *Projection*: Making the sound "travel," so that listeners hear it clearly
- *Quarter Note*: A note that usually lasts one beat
- *Register*: The range of notes produced by a particular voice or instrument
- *Rest*: A sign that indicates silence in a piece of music
- *Rhythm*: A pattern of long and short notes
- *Scale*: A chain of notes moving by step, normally between an octave
- *Sharp*: A sign that shows that a note is to be made a half step higher
- *Staff*: The set of five horizontal lines on which music is written
- *Text*: The words of a piece of music
- *Time Signature*: Two numbers at the start of a piece of music, which indicate the number and type of beats within each measure
- *Tone (Timbre)*: How a voice (or instrument) sounds, the nature of its sounds
- *Tonic*: The key note of a key
- *Treble Clef*: A sign at the beginning of a staff, which indicates that the music contains high notes
- *Vowels*: The letters A, E, I, O and U
- *Whole Note*: A long note, the same length as four quarter notes

Dynamics

- *Pianissimo* (*pp*) = Very Soft
- *Piano* (*p*) = Soft
- *Mezzo piano* (*mp*) = Medium Soft
- *Mezzo forte* (*mf*) = Medium Loud
- *Forte* (*f*) = Loud
- *Fortissimo* (*ff*) = Very Loud

Key Signatures

- No sharps or flats is C Major
- 

Notation

- Know the letter names of the notes in treble clef
- Successfully construct a major scale on a given note

Rhythm
- Correctly write the counting in the music that contains eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes

Musical Information
- What is the title of the anthem?
- Who wrote the text?
- When was this person born?
- When did this person die?
- Who wrote the music?
- When was the composer born?
- When did the composer die?
- Be able to summarize what the text is about

Singing Exam
- Sing an F Major scale on solfège syllables, unaccompanied
- Sing alone an excerpt from current repertoire identified by the director
- Sight sing a simple musical melody
- Clap rhythms at sight

Dark Blue Medal

Commitment, Formation & Character
- **210 Attendance Points (out of 250 possible points)**
- Consistently makes a positive contribution to the choir
- Consistently demonstrates independence and leadership
- Consistently seeks to help younger and/or less experienced choristers
- Consistently demonstrates maturity, responsibility, and good behavior at rehearsals, services, and other events

Vocabulary
- *Breath Marks*: Signs in the music that tell the singer when to breath
- *Chord*: Two or more notes that are sounded together
- *Closed Score*: A score with more than one part on each staff
- *Counterpoint*: Music that has several independent musical lines or parts, for example a bicinium or fugue
- *Dotted Note*: A note with a dot after it; it is one and a half times longer than the original
- *Double Beam*: Two beams joining together sixteenth notes
- *Harmonic Minor Scale*: A minor scale where the 7th scale degree is raised a half step
- *Humming*: Creating a pitch with the lips closed together lightly

- *Intonation*: A degree of tuning, whether or not a note is sounded at the exact, correct pitch
- *Legato*: Sung or played smoothly
- *Major Second*: A interval made up of two half steps
- *Major Third*: The distance between the first and third notes of a major scale, *do* to *mi*, it is comprised of four half steps
- *Major Triad (Chord)*: A chord with a major third between *do* and *mi*
- *Minor Third*: The distance between the first and third notes of a minor scale, *la* to *do* (*do* and *meh*), it is comprised of three half steps
- *Minor Triad (Chord)*: A chord where three half steps at the bottom or with a minor third between *la* and *do* (or *do* and *meh*)
- *Mood*: The atmosphere of a piece
- *Perfect Fourth*: An interval comprised of five half steps; *do* to *fa*
- *Perfect Fifth*: An interval comprised of seven half steps; *do* to *sol*
- *Phrase*: Several notes grouped together
- *Placing*: The technique of "directing" a note into part of the face when singing
- *Related Keys*: A pair of keys, one major and one minor, that share the same key signature, for example: F Major and d minor; sometimes called Parallel Keys
- *Relative Major*: The major key with the same key signature as the minor key
- *Relative Min*or: The minor key with the same key signature as the major key
- *Resonance*: The vibration of the voice in other parts of the body (head and chest)
- *Sixteenth Note*: A note that is one-fourth of a beat
- *Slur*: An articulation marking, a small arc, joining notes together indicating that they are not to be articulated when moving to the next note
- *Staccato*: Detached sounding
- *Staggered Breathing*: Marking breaths at different places for different singers to create the illusion of continuous sound
- *Tempo*: The Italian word for "speed," used to describe the speed of the music
- *Unaccompanied Singing*: To sing without the use of an instrument for accompaniment
- *Unison*: More than one note of the same pitch sounded together
- *Voiced Consonant*: A type of consonant that requires vocal sound to be produced
- *Whole Step (Major Second)*: An interval made up of two half steps

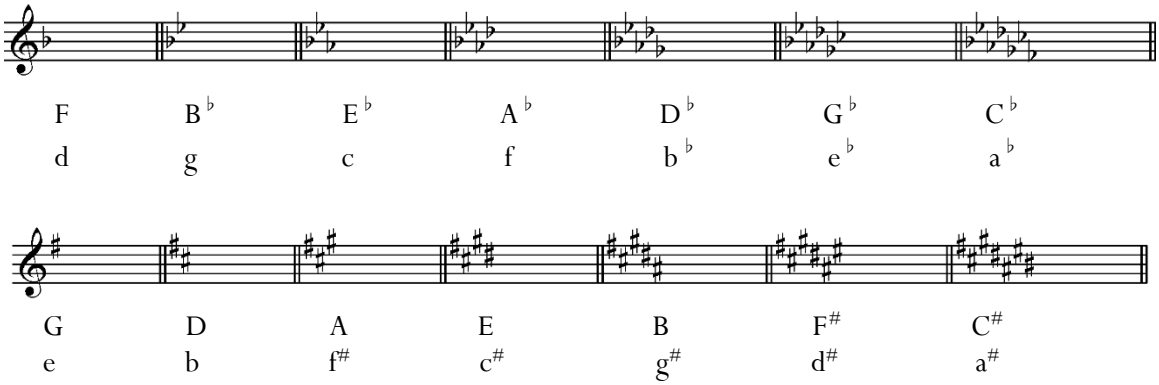
Performance Instructions

- *Adagio*: Slowly
- *Lento*: Very slowly
- *Moderato*: At a moderate (medium) pace
- *Andante*: At a walking pace
- *Allegretto*: Fairly quickly
- *Allegro*: Fast and lively
- *Presto*: Very fast
- *Rallentando* (*rall.*): Get gradually slower

- *Ritardando* (*rit.*): Get gradually slower
- *Ritenuto*: Hold back (get slower at once)
- *Accelerando* (*accel.*): Get gradually faster
- *Fine*: The end
- *Da capo*: Repeat from the beginning
- *Da capo al fine*: Repeat from the beginning and keep going until you reach the word "*fine*"
- *Dal Segno* (*D.S.*): Repeat from the sign
- *Dal segno al fine* (*D.S. al fine*): Repeat from the sign and keep going until you reach the word "*fine*"

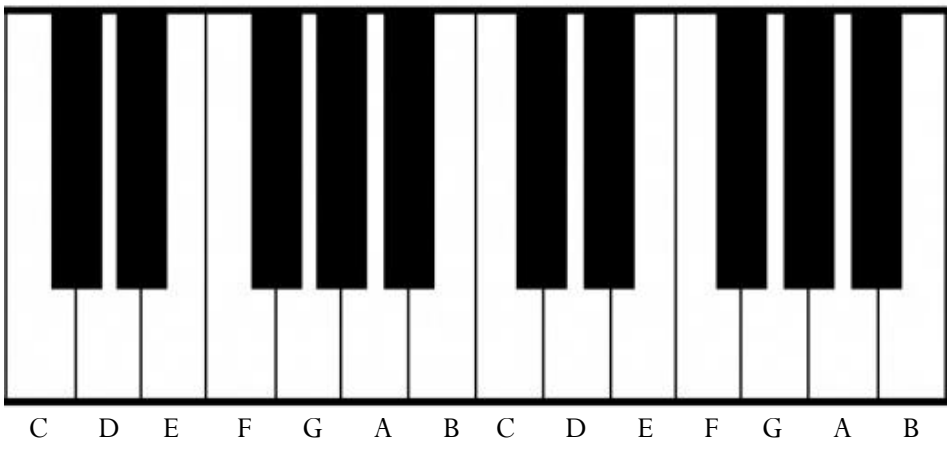
Major & Minor Key Signatures

- Identify parallel and relative major and minor keys
- No sharps or flats is C Major or a minor



Notes on the Piano Keyboard

- Be able to identify the white keys on the piano keyboard:



Notation

- Identify intervals
- Construct a major scale on a given note
- Construct a natural minor scale on a given note
- Construct a melodic minor scale on a given note
- Construct a harmonic minor scale on a given note
- Identify and construct major and minor triads

Repertoire

- What is the title of the anthem?
- Who wrote the text?
- When was this person born?
- When did this person die?
- Who wrote the music?
- When was the composer born?
- When did the composer die?
- Be able to summarize what the text is about

Sight Singing and Aural Exam

- Be able to successfully sight sing short melodic patterns using *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, and *la*. Each singer must use correct solfège terms for each pitch. Exercises will be in C Major, F Major, and G Major.
- Identify major and minor chords
- Sing the following intervals on a given note: M/m 3rd, P 4th, and P 5th
- Chorister sings back simple melodic patterns
- Chorister will identify correct *do*, *mi* and *sol* in a major triad (chord). Chords may be played in root position, first inversion, or second inversion.
- Identify a selected hymn tune by singing it on solfège syllables.

Choristers' Prayer

Bless, O Lord, us thy servants, who minister in thy temple. Grant that what we sing with our lips, we may believe in our hearts; and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

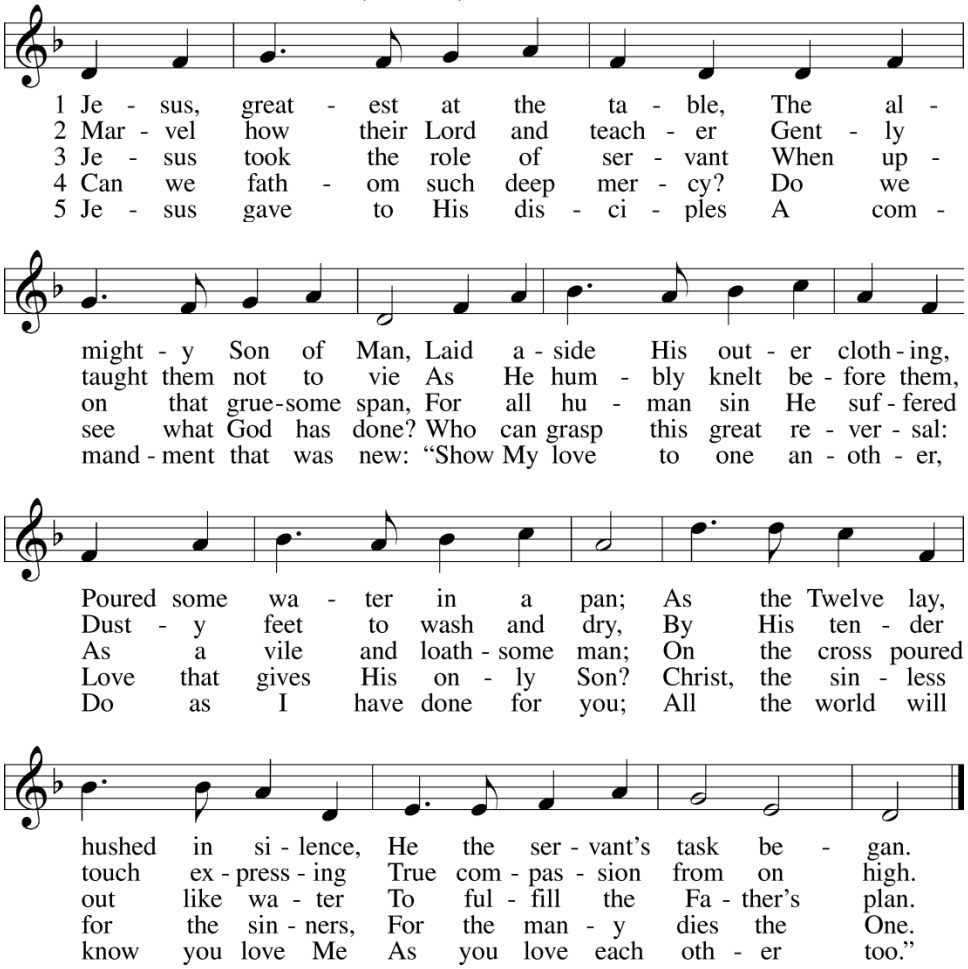
Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ✠ of the world to come. Amen.

"Jesus, Greatest at the Table" (*LSB 446*)



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