



## Membership Handbook



2024–2025 Season

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## **1. Welcome**

Welcome to the Mankato Area Youth Choirs! The Board of Directors and Artistic Staff hope you find the concert season a rewarding and musically enriching experience.

This handbook contains the answers to many questions about schedules, rehearsals, fees, uniforms, events and concerts. All students and parents should become familiar with the information contained in this handbook. Please consult your handbook for information about procedures and events.

## **2. Mission Statement**

Mankato Area Youth Choirs (MAYC) is dedicated to providing an opportunity for any interested youth to experience the joy of singing while developing healthy vocal techniques. Through rehearsal and performance of quality choral music, singers will develop artistic expressiveness, self-confidence, a cooperative spirit, and the joy of working toward and achieving goals with other singers.

## **3. Background**

MAYC is a non-profit, non-auditioned choral music program that has been recognized as South Central Minnesota's premier children's chorus since 1994. Mankato Area Youth Choirs continue to build a musical community that now boasts more than one thousand current and graduated singers who have received the finest choral education possible, in an environment that provides challenging and rewarding opportunities for children in grades one through twelve.

Founded with one choir of 30 students, MAYC has grown to an annual average of 100 singers in six choirs and includes students from throughout the Greater Mankato Area. All choirs are non-audition, and open to young people who enjoy singing. MAYC strives to be an inclusive and diverse group that truly represents our community.

MAYC has been active in performance, travel and collaboration throughout Minnesota and the United States. The chorus was selected to perform at the Nobel Conferences at Gustavus Adolphus

College in 2001 and 2004, Festival of the States in Washington D.C. in 2000 and 2008, Minnesota Music Educators Conference in 1998 and 2007, and the Chicago Windy City Music Festival in 2017. MAYC has been the guest children's chorus for the Mankato Symphony Orchestra on many occasions. Additionally, MAYC has been privileged to collaborate in joint performances with more than a dozen area arts organizations.

The choirs present yearly winter and spring concerts and also sing at civic events, school concerts, and choral festivals.

#### 4. Music Repertoire

MAYC is committed to exposing youth to age-appropriate choral literature that is well-crafted and of merit for young singers. There are numerous considerations when choosing appropriate quality choral music. Music selected may be sacred, spiritual, classical, folk, jazz, popular or a number of other types of music.

#### 5. Choirs

**Training Choir**—grades 1 and 2

**Intermediate Choir**—grades 2 and 3

(second graders placed on recommendation of director)

**Allegro Choir**—grades 4 and 5

**Concert Choir**—grades 6 through 8

**Melodia Choir**—grades 9 through 12

**Ambassador Choir**—open to members in all choirs

The MAYC Ambassador Choir's purpose is to broaden our musical presence in the Greater Mankato community and provide additional performance opportunities for choir members that would like to sing in the community.

Participation in an Ambassador Choir event is optional. While regular MAYC performances are scheduled well in advance, Ambassador events might only have a one- or two-week notice. We know not all performances will be possible for all singers. To gauge participation, an event registration form will be sent to members before an Ambassador Choir event. If you register for an event, please make every effort to honor that commitment.

Rehearsals for Ambassador Choir performances are added only as needed, before or after normal Monday night rehearsals. The uniform will be the MAYC polo and black pants or skirt.

## 6. Registration

Annual registration for the next MAYC program year begins the previous spring. All registration and payments are handled electronically through your family's account on Jackrabbit Class Portal. Once registration is complete your contact, payment, and student information may be [updated at any time](#) by logging in to your family's portal account. Returning members may use your current Jackrabbit Class Portal account to enroll in the next choir level. *Please review your account and student information annually.*

## 7. Enrollment Agreement and Payment Policy

The Mankato Area Youth Choirs is a positive learning experience for young singers—one they will carry with them throughout their lifetime. These young people will be sharing wonderful times together both musically and socially. We encourage all youth to take pride in their membership in this unique choir program. MAYC members are expected to understand and practice commitment and responsibility. **To affirm this, every member is expected to accept our Enrollment Agreement and Payment Policy at registration:**

**ENROLLMENT:** *MAYC is a nine-month program that follows the school year calendar. Registration closes on the last rehearsal in September. Fall rehearsals begin the Monday after Labor Day, and spring rehearsals begin the second Monday in January. The programming season concludes in late April or early May. Optional events may occasionally be added after the official season ends. Students who were unable to participate in the fall semester may enroll in January, to participate in the spring semester.*

**PAYMENT:** *Families may choose to pay all or half of their tuition fee(s) at the time of registration. Otherwise, tuition will be automatically charged in two parts: Part one will be processed after the second rehearsal night in September. Part two will be processed on the first night of rehearsal in January. There will be no full or partial tuition refunds after the third rehearsal night in a semester.*

*To avoid delays caused by expired credit cards, we require families to link a bank account as a second form of payment for their account. Payments will only be initiated from this secondary account if the primary payment method is rejected.*

Tuition does not cover optional events, trips, or any apparel that will be required. Apparel can often be reused from year to year or purchased at our annual used uniform sale. A new formal wear set is roughly \$70, depending on what pieces are required.  
(See section 11 for uniform details)

## 8. Participation Fees

Participation fees are set to reflect increased skills and activity by advanced choirs.

Training (1st–2nd)	\$330 (\$165 per payment)
Intermediate (3rd)	\$330 (\$165 per payment)
Youth (4th–5th)	\$330 (\$165 per payment)
Concert (6th–8th)	\$420 (\$210 per payment)
Melodia (9th–12th)	\$480 (\$240 per payment)

## 9. Scholarships

It is the earnest desire of the Board of Directors of the Mankato Area Youth Choirs that all children interested in singing have the opportunity to participate. In order to facilitate participation, the board has identified the following scholarship opportunities to make the program available to all members. Speak to a board member or the treasurer if you have questions about applying for one of these scholarships.

- a. Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council—PLRAC offers a youth scholarship for students in grades 3–6 and 7–12. Information and applications may be found online at [plrac.org](http://plrac.org).

Applications must be submitted by October 1 for students in grades 7–12, and November 1 for grades 3–6. Because these scholarship forms must also be filled out by directors, **forms must be given to directors no later than 2 weeks before the submission deadline.**

- b. United Way Connecting Kids—MAYC is a United Way supported organization that enables children in our community

to participate in group organizations through partial funding assistance. Request a Connecting Kids application from the MAYC treasurer or apply online at: [sites.google.com/view/connectingkidsmankato](https://sites.google.com/view/connectingkidsmankato)

## 10. Communication

Member families receive new and updated information, event reminders and other critical communication via the email address you list at registration. **It is your family's responsibility to ensure you are checking your email and staying updated with ongoing communication.** If your family has not received an MAYC email within the first two weeks of rehearsal, check your spam or junk emails, as well as the email listed in your family's account on Jackrabbit Class Portal.

Some types of information will also be distributed at rehearsals. Please check with your student's coordinator to see if they have information each week. Non-critical information may occasionally be distributed on our Facebook page (*see section 24*).

**Families may always email MAYC staff members through your family's account on Jackrabbit Class Portal.**

## 11. Concert Uniforms

The following are the formal Concert Uniform requirements for the 2024–25 season. Unless specified, all uniform pieces will be ordered through MAYC. **Uniforms must be paid for prior to delivery of your order.** Uniform payments will be charged through your family's account on Jackrabbit Class Portal. (*See chart for individual prices.*)

- a. All choirs wear black socks/tights and solid black shoes. Athletic-style shoes must have black soles.
- b. Training and Intermediate choir members have the **option** of ordering black skirts or black dress pants through MAYC, or purchasing them on your own. Skirt lengths must fall below the knee.
- c. Allegro, Concert and Melodia choir skirts must be hemmed so

the skirt reaches the floor.

- d. Finishing pieces will be added to uniforms during warm-ups before concerts.
- e. Following a concert, all uniform pieces added at warm-ups must be returned to the warm-up space within 30 minutes.

	<b>Training Choir</b>	<b>Intermediate Choir</b>	<b>Allegro Choir</b>	<b>Concert Choir</b>	<b>Melodia Choir</b>
<b>Polo Shirt</b>	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27
<b>White Wing Collar Shirt</b>	\$22	\$20	\$20		
<b>White Banded Collar Shirt</b>				\$20	
<b>Black Drape Front Blouse</b>					\$40
<b>Black Button Front Shirt</b>					\$20
<b>Tuxedo Pant</b>	\$20*	\$20*	\$20	\$20	\$30
<b>Silhouette Pant</b>	\$30*	\$30*	\$30	\$30	\$30
<b>Long Skirt</b>	\$30*	\$30*	\$30	\$30	\$30

\* Items may be purchased through MAYC or supplied on your own.

## 12. Used Uniform Sale

MAYC will host a used uniform sale in the fall to allow members to purchase gently used uniform pieces at half the cost. Members who have outgrown uniform pieces or who have moved into a different choir, requiring different pieces, may bring items they no longer use, to be sold during this time. Proceeds from the sale will be credited to members who donated the items. **Proceeds for uniforms purchased by MAYC, during the 2022-23 season, will be returned to the organization.**

- a. Clean, gently used uniform pieces purchased through MAYC may be brought to any Monday night rehearsal prior to the



Used Uniform Sale.

- b. Items should be freshly laundered and placed in a zipper-sealed bag along with the guardian's name and phone number, and the choir the child is currently in.
- c. Payment for items sold will be sent home with your child. Items that do not sell will be returned or may be donated to the choir. MAYC is not responsible for any damage to clothing items brought for the purpose of this sale.
- d. Items purchased at the Used Uniform Sale will be charged to your family's account on Jackrabbit Class Portal.

### 13. 2024–2025 Monday Evening Rehearsal Schedule

- 5:00–5:45—Training Choir (3 absences/semester)
- 5:00–5:45—Allegro Choir (3 absences/semester)
- 6:00–6:45—Intermediate Choir (3 absences/semester)
- 6:00–6:55—Concert Choir (3 absences/semester)
- 6:30–8:00—Melodia Choirs (5 absences/semester)

### 14. Rehearsal Attendance Policy

Membership in the Mankato Area Youth Choirs is a commitment to faithful, consistent and punctual attendance. It is expected that rehearsals take a very high priority in each child's life. All rehearsals are an important part of the educational curriculum and performance preparation for the choir. Attendance at rehearsals shows commitment to learning, participating and support of other choir members and the effort of all singers.

#### Absences from rehearsal

Each choir has two choir coordinators in charge of weekly attendance. **As students arrive to rehearsal, they should check in with their coordinator to be marked present. Members who will be absent should report this through their Jackrabbit family portal.** Click on [Report an Absence](#) for details.

Training, Intermediate, Allegro, and Concert choir members may take (3) absences per semester, and Melodia members may take

(5) absences per semester and still participate in the upcoming concert or event. Absences above this number will result in conferencing with the director regarding further participation in the upcoming event.

## 15. Rehearsal Etiquette

MAYC is honored to be a guest of Christ The King Lutheran Church (CTK) and rehearse in their space. Our choirs are known for good behavior and respect in all places. The following procedures help us achieve the discipline and professionalism we wish to demonstrate.

These procedures are reinforced for the singers' safety, to ensure orderly rehearsals and to show respect for each other and the facility we are using.

- a. **Arrive no more than 10 minutes** before the designated rehearsal time and go directly to the designated coordinator to check in before going to the rehearsal room.
- b. **After checking in**, go directly to the rehearsal room or the area designated to wait for rehearsal.
- c. **Singers should not leave the rehearsal room** once rehearsal has begun except for an emergency or if special permission has been granted.
- d. **Please use the restroom and get drinks before rehearsal begins.** Water bottles are allowed in rehearsal. Please do not bring food or any other drink to rehearsal.
- e. **Cell phones are not to be used in rehearsals.**
- f. **Food is only allowed** in the community room. Please clean up and replace chairs and tables if moved during use.
- g. **Do not roam about the building at any time.** We are guests in this space. We must respect it and use only the areas designated for rehearsal and family waiting space: rehearsal rooms, Community Room, foyer area.
- h. **Running, yelling and rowdy behaviors** are not permitted in the building or on the grounds at any time.

- i. **Non-participating siblings** must be supervised by an adult at all times and follow the same respect and procedures for choir members. MAYC staff, board members, choir coordinators and other volunteers may step in to stop behavior of all children.
- j. **Student pick up takes place inside the building.** Training. Intermediate and Allegro choir students will be released to an adult inside the building. Concert and Melodia singers should wait inside the building while waiting for their ride to pick them up in the parking lot off of Pfau Street.

Please observe the designated entrance and exit, and drive with caution through the parking lot at all times.

- k. **Singers must be picked up on time.** Directors and coordinators take the safety of students very seriously. They will not leave until all members have been picked up or driven away. Please respect their time and the choir procedures and be on time for your child. If late pick up becomes a problem continued participation in choir may be rescinded.

Parents with children in more than one choir must be at rehearsal to meet the child in the earliest choir dismissal.

- l. **Music and folders** are property of MAYC but will be used by choir members. Members will be held responsible for any loss or damage to folders or music.
- m. **Any singer caught with illegal substances** or any type of weapon will be immediately suspended from the program with a forfeit of all tuition paid.
- n. **Show respect at all times** for each other, parent volunteers, directors, other singers and their families and the facilities. Do not behave in a manner that is disruptive to the rehearsal or distracting to fellow singers, directors, or accompanists or which prohibits a positive and successful rehearsal.

## 16. Dress Rehearsals

Dress rehearsal gives choirs the opportunity to work out logistics and work through choral pieces in the concert space. Each choir

rehearses individually and with all choirs to prepare massed choir pieces and finalize details in the concert space.

- a. All members are expected to participate. This rehearsal is important to singers and directors in order to present the best concert possible.
- b. Call times will be sent home a month before the concert. Singers arrive 10 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time to find their gathering place, get in order and be prepared to begin.
- c. **Dress rehearsal attire consists of black MAYC polo, nice jeans, and concert shoes.** Formal uniforms are not worn at dress rehearsal.
- d. Parents are not required to stay for rehearsal, but may find it helpful to see ahead of time where their child will be during the performance. Adults who choose to stay should be mindful that choirs are working and need distractions kept to a minimum. **Parents SHOULD be present during the last 10 minutes of rehearsal, for concert day announcements and instructions.**
- e. Directors do their best to keep members singing during their scheduled rehearsal time. However singers should expect some brief down-times as each choir takes its turn. During those times, members may read a book or visit quietly with other choir members. Singers should refrain from moving around the performance space as this is distracting to other choirs rehearsing.
- f. Once rehearsal begins, students should give their full attention to directors and coordinators.
- g. Food or drink (other than water) are NOT allowed within the performance space.
- h. After rehearsal, gather all personal items and leave quietly.

## 17. Performances / Concerts

- a. All members are expected to participate in all performances unless excused by the director, by conference, at least two weeks before the concert.

- b. Our Winter Concert takes place in Christ Chapel on the Gustavus Adolphus College campus. Our Spring Concert will take place at St. John the Baptist Church in Mankato. Singers should arrive 10 minutes before designated time given in order to find places and receive instruction prior to warm-ups.
- d. Arrive dressed in clean, pressed, formal concert uniform (Tuxedo shirt/black bottoms), **including black socks/tights and all-black shoes.**
- e. Go directly to the warm-up space. Choir coordinators will help direct members to the correct place.
- f. Choir coordinators and other volunteers will add finishing pieces to uniforms during warm-ups.
- g. Members should remain quiet and calm to receive instruction from coordinators and directors before the performance.
- h. Though we feel concerts are a time to listen to other choirs, appreciate the artistic effort by all performers and work on audience etiquette, Training and Intermediate choir members may bring a book for quiet reading during longer parts of the concert. NO electronics or toys are allowed.
- i. Training, Intermediate, and Allegro Choirs will have additional parent volunteers sitting with the choirs during formal concerts in order to help members with appropriate concert behavior. If you believe your child would benefit by having an adult sitting close, you are invited to volunteer to be this parent.
- j. Following the concert, all members will return to their warm-up space to return added uniform pieces. A parent or designated adult must go to the warm-up space to pick up singers. No child will be allowed to leave the warm-up space without a designated adult.

## 18. Fundraising

MAYC offers fundraising opportunities to raise funds that support the choir program. Fundraising events *where choirs perform* are a required part of choir participation.

- a. Sponsor a Song—You can be an important part of your student’s concert by sponsoring a song that will be presented by one of the five choirs. Song sponsorships range from \$50–\$100. More information will be available closer to each concert.
- b. Local Business Advertising—MAYC invites businesses to place ads in our concert programs. If you own, manage or know someone who owns or manages a business, please consider asking them to sponsor an ad in our program. Prices listed below are subject to change. Any pricing changes will be made available via email and handouts closer to concert times.

Full Page: 7 ½” wide x 10” high \$200

Half Page: 7 ½” wide x 4 ¾” high \$125

Quarter Page: 3 ½” wide x 4 ¾” high \$75

Logo Insert: fits within a quarter page \$75

- c. Video Valentines—A popular FUNdraiser where families may pay for a singing video valentine to be emailed directly to a loved one, from the choir(s) of their choice. Valentine donations are \$10 per valentine, or \$25 for every three valentines delivered.
- d. Tuesdays on the Town—Throughout the year, MAYC will schedule fundraising events at local restaurants to help support local businesses and raise funds for our choirs. (Due to restaurant availability, some events may fall on a day other than Tuesday.)
- e. Other Fundraising—We may come across other fundraising opportunities throughout the program year and summer. We will look at each opportunity on a case-by-case basis and decide if the opportunity will be a benefit to the choir members.

## 20. Volunteering

As a nonprofit organization, Mankato Area Youth Choirs depends on volunteers. Volunteer opportunities are numerous and diverse. **During the year, all families are expected to volunteer in one or more areas.** Be sure to ask your choir’s coordinator about specific opportunities.

## 21. Severe Weather Policy

In the event of severe weather, MAYC holds the following policy:

- a. If Mankato Area Public Schools are closed or cancel school early due to severe weather, MAYC will not meet. (This does NOT apply to scheduled closures such as in-service days or holidays.)
- b. If Mankato Area Public Schools do not close early but weather reports show a continued deterioration of road conditions, MAYC will make a decision by 4:00 pm and inform members in the following ways:
  1. Send an all-choir email and/or text
  2. Post on our Facebook page

## 22. Special Events

- a. Bring A Friend—All choir members are encouraged to bring a friend to these MAYC rehearsals. Invitation cards will be distributed the first week of rehearsal for members to hand to friends. Special activities will take place during rehearsals to welcome and encourage singers' friends to consider joining MAYC. New members may register through the last Monday in September. Bring A Friend night is held again in January for students who were unable to participate in the fall semester. New member registration for spring semester closes on the last Monday in January.
- b. Super Saturday—Super Saturday is a fun event our members look forward to each September. This event helps to unify our choirs and gives members the opportunity to get to know each other better while we work on some of our group and individual choir songs. The morning begins at 9 a.m. and ends with a mini-concert for parents at noon.
- c. Community Sing—MAYC enjoys singing for members in our community. There are some members that cannot get out to attend our concerts, so we bring a concert to them. These performances are on Monday immediately following the winter and spring concerts. Members wear MAYC polos and dark pants or nice jeans.

- d. School Concert Tour—Allegro and Concert Choir members take a school day in March to travel to area schools to perform a short concert and promote “Music in Our Schools Month.”

### 23. MAYC Leadership

- a. Artistic Staff. MAYC prides itself in hiring superior, professional musicians to create the artistic and educational environment needed to nurture young singers and emerging artists. All staff work together to support the mission of the choir.

*The current MAYC artistic staff is:*

**Leah Ries**, Artistic Director and Director of Concert and Allegro Choirs

**Kristin Baty**, Director of Training and Intermediate Choirs

**Scott Hermanson**, Director of Melodia SATB

**Robin Hughes**, Director of Melodia SATB

**Erin Anderson**, Accompanist

- b. Board of Directors. The MAYC Board of Directors meets regularly to form policy and implement practices that will support and enhance the artistic and managerial efforts of the choir. Each board member holds a position to maintain necessary aspects of the choir. Members serve a three-year term beginning July 1, and new members are always welcome.

*Board members and roles for the current season are:*

**Angela Olson** Chair

ADA Compliance Officer

Member Portal Manager

**Angela Burnett** Vice-Chair

**Jennie Mills** Secretary

**Ryan Ashland** Treasurer

**Morgan Lenhoff** Rehearsal / Concert Manager

**Jessica Lanes** Grants

Fund Raising

Backup Member Portal Manager



- c. Choir Coordinators. Each choir has two coordinators that work with directors and choir members at rehearsals, performances and special events. These adults hold a vital role in the operations of MAYC. Coordinators are selected for the next season from applications sent in at the end of the current season. Interested adults may request an application from another coordinator, board member or staff. *Coordinators receive credit for their member's participation fee.*

Training Choir: **Nicole Dwinell** / *Available*

Intermediate Choir: **Keira Luntsford** / *Available*

Allegro Choir: **Jessica Lanes** / *Available*

Concert Choir: **Samantha Wendt** / **Angela Olson**

Melodia Choir: **Pam Harbarth** / **Mindy Marcus**

Uniform Coordinator: **Morgan Lenhoff**

## 24. MAYC Contact Information

All staff members may be emailed through your family's account on Jackrabbit Class Portal.

General Email: [mcc@mankatochildrenschorus.org](mailto:mcc@mankatochildrenschorus.org)

Email a Board Member: [board@mankatochildrenschorus.org](mailto:board@mankatochildrenschorus.org)

Leave a voice message: 507-774-0597

Visit our website: [MankatoAreaYouthChoirs.org](http://MankatoAreaYouthChoirs.org)

Follow on Facebook: [Mankato Area Youth Choirs](https://www.facebook.com/MankatoAreaYouthChoirs)

Follow on TikTok: [@MankatoAreaYouthChoirs](https://www.tiktok.com/@MankatoAreaYouthChoirs)

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