



TeDeum

Matthew Christopher Shepard
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Lessons
AND *Carols*
FOR *Today*

December 18-19, 2023

**While you wait for the concert to begin,
or during intermission, please use this
QR code to take a six-question survey
so we can better understand who is in
the audience today.**



Thank you for your time!



TeDeum

Matthew Christopher Shepard

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

presents

Lessons
AND *Carols*
FOR *Today*

Featuring the original poetry and narration of **Natasha Ria El-Scari**
and **Jan Kraybill**, organist

December 18, 2023 | 7:00 pm

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Kansas City, MO

December 19, 2023 | 7:00 pm

Village Presbyterian Church
Prairie Village, KS

All are invited to join us for a complimentary reception following the performance as we celebrate Te Deum's sixteenth season.



A note from the Artistic Director

I began Te Deum in 2008 to share and breathe life into sacred music. This has typically meant we performed music of the Western Judeo-Christian persuasion. However, I have always been interested in bringing an expansive understanding of the word Sacred. One early 20th-century theologian defines sacred as that which is of ultimate importance. I understand that in life, love, and our interactions with our world and humankind. In our concert presentations, the more specifically sacred the music, the more I offer universal context, and the more specifically secular, the more I aim to give my audience a divine lens through which to understand the music.

The Anglican service of Lessons and Carols offered a perfect framework to connect the sacred and the secular. Natasha's keen observation of the world and her communicative virtuosity made her the perfect artistic partner for this project. There can be an assumption that biblical interpretation and the social experience of Christmas are the same for all. But we know that isn't the case. Many find joy, but some can't muster it when world news or personal anguish envelops them. Many rejoice in the courage of Mary, while others hang their head in confusion, wondering why a young girl was good enough to give birth to the son of God, yet women can't serve that same Eucharistic body at church.

Natasha provides a fresh lens, an African American Feminist perspective too often unamplified, a unique reaction to the stories long told. We hold her experience shared in poetic verse next to music of the Christmas season to answer the question: how does the hope embedded in familiar Christmas carols speak to these scripturally inspired new lessons?

I am grateful to Natasha for her vulnerability and honesty. And I'm grateful to an audience who supports Te Deum concerts that aim not to distract from real life but to shine a fresh lens on it.

–Matthew Christopher Shepard

I remember getting an eager and delightful email from Matthew Christopher Shepard inviting me to a Zoom conversation about a project he was working on and wanted my participation. I had never met Matthew before yet he was someone familiar with my work and told me he wanted to have my particular lens on a Te Deum production. He continued to enthusiastically explain the sacred Anglican nine lessons and the power it holds during the most sacred time of year for Christians, in December. I listened but was also slightly distracted by my own thoughts, wondering if he had the correct Natasha. As I thought it I spoke it, asking if he was sure he had the correct poet. He assured me he did. I retorted, "you know I am a Black Feminist and non-Christian woman...did I mention I am an outspoken Black Feminist and I am not a Christian..." No matter how I attempted to explain it to Matthew, he reassured me he had selected the correct person and that he was speaking to me, Natasha Ria El-Scari, about this project and performance.

When I returned home later that night, I shared with my new and devout Christian husband that I had an unusual assignment. His immediate response was, "is he sure he got the right person?" After reassuring my husband he quickly stated that he thought I could be ideal for the assignment. After all, I had just married a wonderful man in an interfaith wedding, with three sacred practitioners and powerful traditional African drumming. Why did I even question Matthew's selection? It was because of my background I was in doubt.

I left Christianity at 15 and embarked on my own spiritual journey which led me to all sorts of teaching and religious beliefs from traditional indigenous worship, Rastafarianism, Sunni Islam, the Nation of Islam, eastern Buddhism and more. When I would attend St. Rest Baptist Church in rural Ashdown, Arkansas with my maternal grandmother, I remember my grandfather would never step foot in the church but always had The Holy Bible close to him; I knew there was something I was seeking. My grandmother would praise and pray in ways I had never seen and I felt so connected to that expression but struggled with the lesser power women had in the African American churches I visited which were few). My brave mother gave me simple advice when I left my birth faith community, Linwood United Church, she said, "when



A note from the poet

you walk away from your faith, your return will be even stronger.” I understood, even then, I wasn’t walking away from faith, I was walking away from how religion had been given to me. I was walking away from pretending that I believed everything I was reading and had studied. I was walking away from the adults that encouraged to some degree blind faith and that never settled well with me. I was walking away from the concept of sin and hell. I knew there was something else out there but I wasn’t exactly sure, just that I was willing to explore.

I was hungry to know more about why people believed the way they do and how people keep faith at the center of their lives. When I was on the eve of my 30th year I entered a divorce with two young children and within weeks of filing for divorce my sister and best friend died unexpectedly leaving her 13 year old son. The months and years ahead were rough but it was in those times my faith was sharpened and I established a consistent spiritual community and spiritual practice. I started attending the Center for Spiritual Living Kansas City just a few months before I filed for divorce. Nearly two decades later, I call this space my spiritual home.

In addition to being a member, I have been on staff for over seven years and I even own a business, Natasha Ria Art Gallery, inside of these sacred walls. It is here where my deep belief that not a single path is more sacred than any other had a distinction in language attached to what conclusion I had come to over 30 years before...all roads to God matter, all are important and all are sacred and no male God or man was in control. No one is better than any other and our faith reminds us that we are spiritual beings having a human experience. We are all equal, all loved, all valued, all worthy.

As I created the works for this concert, I allowed all of my beliefs to collide. My feminism led me, my activism jogged right beside and my deep love of humanity propelled this project. Matthew only had to wheel me in a few times on a line or two that occurred overly exotic and I was filled with joy to be able to laugh about it and come to an understanding. Lessons is a reminder that we can and should pause for the sacred season, be reminded of our humanity and all its flaws and failures but also to be renewed by the sacred belief in renewal and redemption. With this project, we focused on eight of the nine lessons with the aligned scripture for each of the poems written. Please accept this offering of love, of the grappling with faith that has led me to this sacred moment with each of you. All the poems here were created with and for this wonderful collaboration with Te Deum, Lessons and Carols for Today, and for that, I am eternally grateful!

–Natasha Ria El-Scari



program

Holiday lights at Country Club Plaza. Photo: Shelley/Adobe Stock

Opening Anthem

God is With Us

John Tavener, 1944–2013

Josh Markley, *baritone*

God is with us.
Hear ye people,
Even to the uttermost end of the earth.
The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.
The people that dwell in the shadow of death,
upon them the light has shined.
For unto us a child is born! For unto us a son is given!
And the government shall be upon his shoulder;
And his name shall be called Wonderful! Counsellor!
The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.
Hear ye people,
Even to the uttermost end of the earth.
God is with us.
Christ is born! Christ is born! Christ is born!

First Lesson

Woman

Anthem

Magnificat

Arvo Pärt, b. 1936

*Magnificat anima mea Dominum
et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo,
salutari meo.
Quia respexit
humilitatem ancillæ suæ:
ecce enim ex hoc
beatam me dicent omnes generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est,
et sanctum nomen eius,
et misericordia eius a progenie
in progenies timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo,
dispersit superbos
mente cordis sui.
Deposuit potentes de sede
et exaltavit humiles;
esurientes implevit bonis
et divites dimisit inanes.*

*Suscepit Israel puerum suum
recordatus misericordiæ suæ,
sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini eius in sæcula.*

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God
my Saviour.
Because he hath regarded
the humility of his handmaid:
for behold from henceforth
all generations shall call me blessed.
For he hath done great things for me,
he that is mighty: and holy is his name.
And his mercy is from generation
unto generation, to them that fear him.
He hath showed might in his arm:
he hath scattered the proud in the
conceit of their heart.
He hath put down the mighty from
their seat and hath exalted the humble.
He hath filled the hungry with good
things: and the rich he hath sent
empty away.
He hath received Israel his servant,
being mindful of his mercy.
As he spoke to our fathers:
to Abraham and to his seed for ever.

Second Lesson *Reward*

Carol

O Come All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES, John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786



1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
2. True God from true God, light from light e - ter - nal, †
3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion; O
4. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this hap - py morn - ing; †



1. come ye, O come__ ye to Beth - - le - hem!
2. Born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;
3. sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n__ a - bove!
4. Je - sus, to Thee__ be all glo - - ry giv'n;



1. Come and be - hold Him, born the King of An - gels:
2. Ver - y__ God, be - got - ten, not cre - at - ed! O
3. Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est!
4. Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing.



come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a - dore Him, O



come, let us a - dore Him,__ Christ__ the Lord!

Third Lesson *Womb Weary Miracle*

Anthem

For unto us a child is Born

Messiah, George Fredric Händel, 1685–1759

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given,
and the government shall be upon His shoulder;
and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor,
the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Fourth Lesson *Imagine*

Carol

Away in a Manger

MUELLER, attr. to James R. Murray, 1841-1905



1. A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, The
2. The cat - tle are low - ing; the poor ba - by wakes, But
3. Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask Thee to stay Close



1. lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head. The
2. lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes. I
3. by me for - ev - er and love me I pray. Bless



1. stars in the sky — looked down where He lay, The
2. love Thee, Lord Je - sus; look down from the sky, And
3. all the dear chil - dren in Thy ten - der care, And



1. lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
2. stay by my side un - til morn - ing is nigh.
3. fit us for heav - en to live with Thee there.

Fifth Lesson *Quantum Leadership*

Anthem

What Child is This

arr. Matthew Colloton, b. 1976

1. What child is this who laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain This, this is Christ the king
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary.

2. Why lies he in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent word is pleading. *Refrain*
3. So bring him incense, gold and myrrh;
Come peasant, king to own him.
The King of Kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone him. *Refrain*

Sixth Lesson ***Give My Only Son?***

Anthem

Coventry Carol

B.E. Boykin, b. 1989

Cassandra Leon, *alto*

Lully, lullay,
thou little tiny child,
by by, lully lullay.
O sisters too, how may we do
for to preserve this day this poor youngling,
for whom we do sing by by, lully lullay?
Herod the king, in his raging,
charged he hath this day his men of might,
in his own sight, all young children to slay.
That woe is me, poor child for thee!
and ever morn and day, for thy parting
neither say nor sing by by, lully lullay!

Seventh Lesson ***Fear***

Anthem

Bring me all your dreams

Christopher H. Harris, b. 1985

Bring me all of your dreams,
You dreamer,
Bring me all your
Heart melodies
That I may wrap them
In a blue cloud-cloth
Away from the too-rough fingers
Of the world.

Langston Hughes (1902–1967)

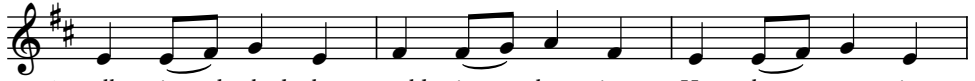
Carol

Still, Still, Still

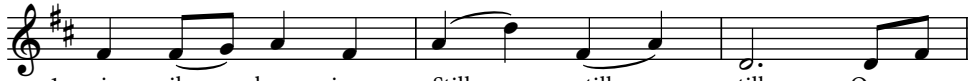
arr. Norman Luboff, 1917-1987



1. Still, still, still One can hear the fall - ing snow. For
 2. Sleep, sleep, sleep, 'Tis the eve of our Sav - iour's birth. The
 3. Dream, dream, dream Of the joy - ous day to come. While



1. all is hushed, the world is sleep - ing Ho - ly star, its
 2. night is peace - ful all a - round you, Close your eyes, let
 3. guard - ian an - gels with - out num - ber Watch you as you



1. vig - il keep - ing. Still, still, still One can
 2. sleep sur - round you. Sleep, sleep, sleep, 'Tis the
 3. sweet - ly slum - ber. Dream, dream, dream Of the



1. hear the fall - ing snow.
 2. eve of our Sav - iour's birth.
 3. joy - ous day to come.

Eighth Lesson **Diamond Life**

Anthem

The Saviour's Birth

arr. Marques L.A. Garrett, b. 1986

Hodie Christus natus est:

Today Christ is born;

hodie Salvator apparuit.

today the Savior has appeared.

There's a star in the East on Christmas morn,

Rise up, shepherd, and follow,

It will lead to the place where the Savior's born

Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Follow, follow, rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Follow the star of Bethlehem.

Venite, venite in Bethlehem:

Come, O come to Bethlehem:

Mary had a baby, Yes, Lord.

What did she name Him? Yes, Lord!

She name Him King Jesus, Yes, Lord!

Natum videte Regem Angelorum.

See the new-born King of Angels.

If you take good heed to the Angel's word,
You'll forget your flock, you'll forget your herd.

Leave your flocks and leave your lambs,
Leave your sheep and leave your rams.

Puer natus est nobis,

A boy is born to us,

Puer natus est in Bethlehem,

A boy is born in Bethlehem,

Hic jacet in praesepio

Here lies in a manger,

et vocabitur nomen ejus,

and his name shall be called:

magni consilii Angelus.

the Angel of great council.

Oh, Mary, what you gonna call yo' pretty little baby?

Carol

Please stand.

Joy to the World

ANTIOCH, George Fredric Händel;

text by Isaac Watts, 1674–1748



1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let Earth re - ceive her
2. Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns; Let all their songs em -
3. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the na - tions



1. King; Let ev' - ry heart pre - pare Him room, And
2. - ploy; While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Re -
3. prove The glo - ries of His right - eous - ness, And



1. Heav'n and na - ture sing, And Heav'n and na - ture
2. - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing
3. won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His



1. sing, And Heav'n, and Heav'n and na - ture sing.
2. joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
3. love, And won - ders, won - ders of His love.



Te
Deum
the
20
23
20
24
season

Soprano

Clare Bryan
Lucy Conklin
Paige Flenniken
Abby Helt
Kristen Ellis Johnson
Lindsey Lauterwasser
Sarah Powers

Alto

Kayla Bradley
Zachary Cope
Connor Davis
Rupal Gupta
Nanette Kraus
Cassandra Leon
Ann Lewis Marzette
Julia Kasten Sharp

Tenor

Tom Assel
Matthew Bobela
Jonathan Doram
Tim Gorski
Colin Riley
Raphael Rodriguez

Bass

Jeff Jasperson
Ryan Layton
Josh Markley
Benny Martinson
John Ross
Ben Wheeler

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Roslinde Rivera
AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST

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Te Deum Inc.

3501 Campbell St.
Kansas City, MO 64109
www.te-deum.org

Te Deum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
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of the law.

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Te Deum is planning for the future!

Are you interested in getting involved in the growth of Te Deum? Contact Operations Manager Shannon Solis at shannon@te-deum.org for more information.

Artistic Director

Matthew Christopher Shepard's unique career path has led him to concert halls conducting both professional orchestras and choirs, to collegiate and secondary school classrooms to guest conduct and lecture in musicology and church music, and to communities of faith to lead both Christian and Jewish worship services. His intellectual curiosity, fearless programming, and magnetic leadership have made him one of the most sought-after conductors in the region.

Mr. Shepard is founder and conductor of Te Deum, which has established itself as one of the premier choral ensembles in the midwest. He is frequently engaged as a conducting clinician, most recently with the American Choral Directors Association Kansas State Convention Honor Choir in 2021. With his growing reputation in the Early Music field, Mr. Shepard's work and contributions to the field have twice been featured in the publication *Early Music America*, and has presented lectures on historical chant performance, music history and performance practice. With Te Deum he has given period performances of great pillars of baroque music including Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri*, J.S. Bach's *St. John Passion*, and Bach's *B-Minor Mass*.

As an orchestral conductor, Mr. Shepard has conducted several ensembles in the area, including The Philharmonia of Greater Kansas City, the Kansas City Civic Orchestra, and the Kansas City Baroque. He has also served as orchestra director at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. In the summer of 2018 he was invited to conduct the closing orchestral concert of the American Guild of Organists National Convention in Helzberg Hall at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

Beginning his musical studies in woodwinds and voice, Mr. Shepard holds an undergraduate degree from William Jewell College, two master's degrees, studying both choral and orchestral conducting at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance, and is pursuing Doctoral studies at the University of Illinois where he concurrently holds a teaching assistantship. Mr. Shepard has had additional conducting study as a fellow at the Conductors Institute at Bard College Conservatory under Maestro Leon Botstein and at the Oregon Bach Festival Composers Institute.

Organist

Dr. Jan Kraybill is a musical leader, dynamic speaker, performer, educator, organ consultant, and enthusiastic advocate for the power of music to change lives for the better. In addition to maintaining a very active concert schedule, in the Kansas City metro area she is Organ Conservator at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, Organist-in-Residence at Community of Christ headquarters, and organist at Village on Antioch Presbyterian Church.

Throughout her career Jan has performed as both a solo and collaborative musician, taught workshops on a variety of topics, and inspired audiences and congregations. While in high school in Colby, Kansas, she was invited to play her first European piano recital in Andover, England. Since then she has performed in many venues in North America and Europe, as well as in Australia, Russia, South Korea, and Tahiti. In 2015, she designed and led a hymn festival at the International Gathering of Hymn Societies at Cambridge University. She has been a featured artist and presenter at regional and national conventions of the American Guild of Organists (AGO), the Hymn Society in the U.S. and Canada, the American Choral Directors Association, and other musicians' organizations, and on American Public Media's *Pipedreams* and other broadcasts. Several solo and collaborative recordings are available, including her

Grammy-nominated album *The Orchestral Organ*, released by Reference Recordings in 2019 and nominated as Best Classical Instrumental Solo and in two other categories in 2020. Her most recent solo disc is *Marked for Grace*, released by Naxos in 2021.

Dr. Kraybill has degrees in music education and piano and organ performance. She attained the AGO's Fellow certificate, organists' highest certification level, in 2010. She has served in local, regional, and national roles in the AGO and other non-profit organizations. Her extra-musical interests include lacemaking, painting, and riding her Harley-Davidson motorcycle. You are welcome to visit www.jankraybill.com for more information.

Singers

Tom Assel studied vocal technique with Dr. Stephen Weber at Amarillo College, Texas. Tom earned a Bachelor of Science in electrical and computer engineering and a master's degree in electrical engineering from the School of Computing and Engineering at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. While there, he sang in the Conservatory Concert Choir under the direction of Dr. Charles Robinson, and University Singers under the direction of Dr. Ryan Board. He and his wife Julie own and operate Assel Grant Services, a grant consulting firm specializing in grant research and proposal writing in a variety of fields. Tom has been singing with Te Deum since fall 2010.

Matthew Bobela is honored to join Te Deum for its 2023-2024 season! Matthew is the Director of Sacred Music and Liturgy and the Elementary Music and Spanish Teacher at St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church and School in Kansas City, Missouri. A St. Joseph, Missouri native, he is currently pursuing a Master of Music Education from Missouri State University. Matthew holds a Bachelor of Music Education with a Vocal Concentration from Missouri Western State University where he graduated *summa cum laude* and served as commencement speaker in May 2022. Matthew greatly enjoys sharing music throughout the Midwest in his parish ministry and in an active sacred and secular performance schedule. In addition to his involvement in vocal and choral music, Matthew serves as the Vice President of the St. Joseph Symphony Board of Directors where he is an active member of their Education and Strategic Planning committees.

Kayla Bradley, a new addition to Te Deum's alto section, is elated to perform again in such a prestigious choir for the first time in several years. Throughout her school years, nothing brought Kayla as much joy as participating in activities like concert and show choirs, concert and marching bands, and school musicals. She went on to receive her Bachelor of Vocal Music Education at Northwest Missouri State University in her hometown of Maryville. Now, she is a third-year vocal music teacher at Smith-Cotton Junior High School in Sedalia, fulfilling a dream of directing her own show choir. Though opportunities to perform have been scarcer in recent years, Kayla recently played the role of Midge Mahoney in Sedalia's 2023 community theater production of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. When not directing or performing, Kayla enjoys a night of crocheting, anime, and snuggles from her two cats, Rona and Mimsy.

Clare Bryan is a soprano and music educator currently teaching in Auburn, Kansas at the elementary level. She received her Bachelor's degree in music education from Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, where she studied voice with Dr. Ann Marie Snook, and is currently pursuing her master's in music education at the University of Kansas. She has taught music at elementary, middle, and high school levels, as well as Latin. An avid choral singer, Clare has sung with Topeka Festival Singers, the Oratorio Society (Syracuse, New York), and Schola Cantorum of Syracuse. In her free time, Clare enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, walks, and planning musical projects with friends.

Lucy Conklin is pleased to once again be singing with Te Deum this season! She holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Kansas. As a lifelong chorister, Lucy participated in numerous choral ensembles at KU, including Chamber Singers under the direction of Dr. Paul Tucker. Additionally, Lucy sings with KC VITAs Chamber Choir and is a founding member of Ignea Strata, an all-female vocal quartet specializing in genres spanning from medieval to modern. Lucy enjoys bringing sparkle to the lives of KC residents as sales manager at Toner Jewelers in Leawood. She lives in Brookside with her husband, Dave Kaleba, and two wonderful (if a little tubby) cats.

Zachary Cope is overjoyed to join Te Deum for the 2023-24 season. Zachary is a countertenor from Topeka, KS. He currently serves as the Associate Choirmaster at Grace Episcopal Cathedral in Topeka, where he leads the Chorister program and assists with the Cathedral Choir as a director and singer. He is a recent graduate of the University of Kansas, under the tutelage of Dr. Genaro Méndez, with a master's degree in vocal performance. At KU, Zachary performed as Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and Tolomeo (*Giulio Cesare*). Zachary is also an avid violinist and served as concertmaster of the symphony and as a violinist in the honors string quartet during his undergraduate studies. Outside of singing, Zachary enjoys late-night horror movie binges, craft beer, all things Lana Del Rey, and a good ol' Kansas thunderstorm.

Connor Davis is excited to join Te Deum for her first season. She received her bachelor's degree in vocal music education from Missouri State University in the fall of 2021. During her time at Missouri State, she was a member of numerous choral ensembles, featured on three commercially released choral albums, and was selected to sing in the 2020 World Youth Choir. She will begin teaching at Discovery Middle School in Liberty, Missouri, this year, and was previously the choir director at Carl B. Bruce Middle School in Kansas City, Kansas. Outside of teaching middle school, Connor also teaches piano. She enjoys cooking, hiking, spending time with family/friends, and long walks with her fiancé, Ethan, and dog, Freya.

Jonathan Doram is thrilled to join Te Deum for its 16th season! He currently works as an artist model at the Kansas City Art Institute and as accompanist at Blue Valley High School. He is also a member of the Heartland Men's Chorus and Madrigalia Bar Nonne choir in the Kansas City metro. He recently served as the choral director at Lincoln College Preparatory Academy and Middle School in Kansas City, Missouri, and previously at Forest Heights STEM Academy in Little Rock, Arkansas. In his free time, he enjoys writing, reading, and playing tennis. You may find out more at his website: <https://www.jonathandoram.com/>.

Paige Flenniken is thrilled to start her second season with Te Deum! She received her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance at Oklahoma State University where she performed the roles of Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Susannah (*Il Segretto di Susannah*), Nella (*Gianni Schicchi*), Isabelle/Madeline (*Face on the Barroom Floor*) and Aldonza (*Man of La Mancha*). Paige enjoys the competition circuit and has won multiple awards from the National Association of Teachers of Singing. She is active in the choral world as a soprano soloist for *Messiah* at OSU for 3 concurrent years, soprano soloist for Haydn's *Lord Nelson's Mass*, performed twice at Carnegie Hall with the OSU University Singers and soprano soloist for Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with the Midland-Odessa Symphonic Chorale. She moved recently from Texas with her husband, Joe, and is excited to be involved in the thriving KC music scene.

Tim Gorski is excited to join Te Deum for the 2023-24 season. He holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Education from Millikin University and a Master of Music Education from the University of Kansas. Tim has been teaching high school choir for five years and is in his second year as the choir director at William Chrisman High School in Independence. Tim and his wife, Christina, relocated to the KC area from Northeast Illinois in the summer of 2022, so they enjoy exploring different parts of the city and completing DIY projects on their house. They live in Grain Valley with their adorable bully, Bishop.

Rupal Gupta, now in her fifth season with Te Deum, initially cultivated her love of choral music with the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum and Chamber Singers. Sacred music compels her in its capacity to connect humanity to the divine. She earned her undergraduate degree in History and Science at Harvard and her medical degree at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. A board-certified pediatrician, Rupal was previously Interim Division Director of General Academic Pediatrics at Children's Mercy Hospital and Medical Director of Operation Breakthrough Clinic. Currently, she is a Clinical Services Director with Kyruus, Inc., a Boston-based Health IT company that aims to connect patients to the right care. She loves baking, yoga, and reading, and maintains pediatric ties through the American Academy of Pediatrics. She lives in Leawood, KS with her husband and her favorite and most rapidly growing creative endeavors: their two children.

Abby Helt is excited to sing with Te Deum again this year. Abby currently teaches third grade at St. Ann Catholic School. She graduated from Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Music Education degree. At KSU, she studied voice under Professor Cheryl Richt and sang in multiple choirs, serving as a section leader, under Dr. Julie Yu and Dr. Joshua Oppenheim. Abby performed as a soloist with K-State's Concert Choir at the 2018 Southwest American Choral Director's Association conference, Grand Chorus Rhapsody 2019, and Collegium Musicum. Abby has also worked with the Flint Hills Children's Choir in Manhattan, KS. In addition to singing, Abby enjoys road-tripping, painting, and hanging with her family and friends.

Jeff Jasperson is excited to sing with Te Deum for a fifth season. Jeff graduated from the University of Kansas in 2013 with a Bachelor of Arts in Music, voice emphasis. At KU, he performed with numerous choirs and was a four-year member of the KU Marching Jayhawks as a trumpet player. From 2017-2019, Jeff was a director of the choral variety show *Encore!* at Free State High School in Lawrence. Jeff serves as the tenor section leader of the Trinity Lutheran Church Choir in Mission, KS, and works as a paraeducator at Shawnee Mission North High School. He has recently sung the national anthem for the Royals, Sporting KC, and KC Current. Jeff and his golden retriever Berkeley live in south KC. In his spare time, Jeff enjoys taking Berkeley on walks, distance running, cooking, cheering on the Chiefs, Jayhawks, Royals, Sporting KC, and KC Current, and attempting to win his fantasy football league.

Kristen Ellis Johnson has been singing her heart out since before she could join the church and school choirs as a child. She played violin through high school, even though it meant skipping lunch to also sing in the concert choir. During college, Kristen fell in love with the Anglican choral tradition singing for Dr. Arnold Epley in William Jewell's concert choir, then spent a year abroad cycling to Evensong services all over Cambridge. Kristen has been a soprano in the Grace & Holy Trinity Cathedral choir since 2005, singing under Canon John Schaefer and Dr. Paul Meier. She is thrilled to begin singing again after the great pandemic-induced pause in choral singing. By day, Kristen is an attorney practicing administrative and regulatory law in the Environmental, Energy, Mining, and Transportation division at Stinson. She enjoys gardening, yoga, dancing, and spending time with her husband and three children.

Nanette Kraus is at her musical best when collaborating with others as a pianist and singer. From accompanying musicians at KU, Emporia State University, and Baker University, to school and honor choirs in Kansas and Missouri, from musical theater productions to church, synagogue and community choirs, Nanette enjoys working with each age and stage in the musical process. She currently assists the next generation of singers at Liberty High School and the lifelong learners of the Liberty Community Chorus. Nanette joined the Te Deum alto section in 2013 and serves on the Te Deum board of directors. A native Kansan, Nanette earned degrees from Bethany College and the University of Kansas and resides in the Northland with her husband Brian.

Lindsey Lauterwasser is so excited to be singing with Te Deum in her second season. She graduated from Benedictine College with a Bachelor of Music Education and is in her second year as the choir teacher at Lakewood Middle School in Overland Park, KS. She also enjoys teaching piano lessons, and music classes for young children. Lindsey has always loved to sing, especially in a choir, most recently participating in various choirs at Benedictine, as well as leading the a cappella group. Outside of singing, she loves to read, go for walks, play board games, spend time with family and friends, and cheer on the Chiefs with her husband, Kyle.

Ryan Layton is a teacher, singer, conductor, and collaborative pianist. Ryan currently serves as assistant choir director at Blue Springs High School and director of music at Barry Christian Church. He previously taught at Marshall High School (MO) and worked with the Choral Arts Alliance of Missouri, serving as conductor of the Columbia Chamber Choir and assistant director/accompanist of the Columbia Chorale. Additionally, he has accompanied numerous school, community, and honor choirs and conference reading sessions. Ryan is the KC Metro district representative and coordinator of the state sight-singing bee for the Missouri Choral Directors Association. He earned a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Music Education from the University of Missouri (2018) and recently started coursework for a Master of Music Education at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Ryan is an avid New York Times crossword solver, devoted KC and Mizzou sports fan, and reluctant runner.

Cassandra Leon is a mezzo-soprano residing in Kansas City, Missouri. She is a graduate of Northwest Missouri State University and while there attained a Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Music Performance. Some of her most notable solo performances were *Lilacs* by George Walker for voice and orchestra and Moses Hogan's *Deep River* Collection. While Cassandra has a deep love for solo performance, she truly cherishes ensemble work. She has always had a deep passion for the choral arts. Being part of such a world-class ensemble, such as Te Deum, is a dream come true for her.

Josh Markley is thrilled to return to Te Deum. He holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in voice and has been recognized for his research on the development of the baritone voice in the 17th and 18th centuries, lauded as an "excellent resource" by the Metropolitan Opera Guild. On the opera stage, he has performed Marcello in Puccini's *La Boheme*; Tarquinius in Britten's *Lucretia*; Il Conte in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*; Don Alfonso in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, among others. His concert soloist experiences include Mendelssohn's *Elijah*; Mahler's *Symphony of a Thousand*; Haydn's *Creation*; Orff's *Carmina Burana*; Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolles*; Vaughn Williams' *Sea Symphony*; Handel's *Messiah*; and the *Requiems* of Mozart, Verdi, and Faure. Currently, he is the Director of Music for the Barstow School—Upper and Middle Divisions. He and his wonderfully talented wife Diane are the proud parents of two amazing girls, Nora and Samantha.

Benny Martinson is excited to join Te Deum this year. Benny previously sang with Khorikos in New York City, and in many choirs prior. He holds a Master of Music in Composition from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and a Bachelor of Music in Composition from Butler University. Benny grew up in Eagle River, Alaska, and moved to Kansas City last year with his wife, his daughter, and his cat, Henry Purrcell.

Ann Lewis Marzette joined Te Deum Chamber Choir in the fall of 2009 for its first full season. She graduated from William Jewell College in 2009 with degrees in piano performance and church music with a vocal emphasis. In 2013, she completed her Master of Arts in teaching from the University of Central Missouri. She currently teaches at Kearney Middle School, where she serves as director of vocal music. Prior to teaching at KMS, Ann served as the vocal music teacher at Marshall High School (Missouri) for four years and was the director of the Marshall Community Chorus. Outside the music realm, Ann works at Anthropologie to support her dress addiction. She also runs a pie side hustle, Easy As Pie KC.

Sarah Powers is so excited to make beautiful music with Te Deum again! She received a Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from William Jewell College (2015) and has been singing in and around Kansas City ever since. During her time at Jewell, she was a Choral Scholar and sang in the Concert Choir and Schola Cantorum. She has appeared as a soloist with the Liberty Symphony Orchestra, Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, Midwest Chamber Ensemble and Musica Vocale. She currently sings with Cardinalis and has held a soprano section leader position at St. Mary's Episcopal Church since 2015. When she is not singing, Sarah works as an Assistant Property Manager in Olathe, KS, where she lives with her husband and son, and their family dog.

Colin Riley joined Te Deum in 2019 after arriving in the KC area from Upstate New York. Colin performed with the nationally recognized chamber choir Ensemble Companio from 2014 to 2019 – serving as a tenor, officer, and board member. Colin graduated from Cornell University in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering. While there, he sang with the Cornell University Glee Club under Scott Tucker, with performances including *Ein Deutsches Requiem* in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong; the 2009 American Choral Directors Association National Convention; and a stage production of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*. Colin is Vice President of Product and Application Engineering for Rondo, an energy storage company. He also holds a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Georgia Tech and a Master of Business Administration from Clarkson University. Colin lives in Overland Park with his wife and two daughters.

Rafael Rodriguez has been a chorister since he was a little boy and brings a strong background and passion for early and sacred music. Rafael attended Saint Mary's College in Kansas and sang under the direction of Dr. Andrew Childs for over 8 years. Rafael also sang several seasons with Collegium Musicum at Kansas State University led by Dr. David Wood, and the Masterworks Chorale led by Dr. Jeffrey Ward. Rafael and his family moved to Kansas City in the summer of 2020 where he has become a valuable member of the Kansas City choral community, performing with Te Deum, Songflower Chorale, as well as the St. Vincent de Paul Church community where he directs Gregorian chant, sings in the choir, and teaches music. Rafael has sung with Te Deum since the winter of 2021.

John Ross is a bass with many years of experience singing in ensemble, choral, and opera settings in Kansas City and beyond. Some of the organizations John has performed with include Te Deum, KC Symphony Chorus, Johnson County Chorus, KC Singers, Cathedral Schola at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, BMACC/Black Musical Artists Community Chorus, Musica Sacra, Madrigalia Bar Nonne, Carolers of Note, KC Metro Opera, Lawrence Opera Theatre, Landlocked Opera and Sweet Accordes. His singing has taken him all over the KC Metro as well as New York, Austria, and Germany.

Julia Kasten Sharp is excited to be starting her fourth season with Te Deum! A graduate of UMKC Conservatory, Julia holds a Bachelor of Music in both Vocal Performance and Music Theory. She can be found around KC singing with different choral groups such as Tallgrass Chamber Choir, Kantorei KC, and Cardinalis. Outside of music, her favorite hobbies include cuddling with her cat, Charlie, and road-tripping across the country with her husband, Jake.

Ben Wheeler joined Te Deum in 2021. He learned to love music as a Suzuki-trained violinist under Alice Joy Lewis in Ottawa, KS from age four through eighteen. He has a Bachelor of Music in Music Theater from Oklahoma City University, where he studied with vocal teacher Larry Keller. He sang for two seasons with Light Opera Oklahoma in Tulsa and has performed in many musicals and operas in school and community theaters in Kansas and Oklahoma. He had a blast singing with the Central Standard Barbershop Chorus in KC from 2017-2019. He enjoys volleyball, skiing, live music, and racking up wins with his crew of fully grown adults on *Call of Duty*.



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