



November 24, 2025

Dear fellow parishioners,

Around the fourth grade, one of my teachers suggested that I audition for The Chattanooga Boy's Choir. All went well, and as a boy soprano, I was lucky enough to sing with them for the next several years, until the inevitable transition to a lower part! We met once a week, at a boy's club, where we could jump on their huge trampoline in the gym, play basketball, and just horse around. Then in rehearsal, we learned to sing in harmony, how to lean into a dissonance, and to savor the resolution; how to match vowel sounds, temper vibratos, and in general, how to breathe and phrase as a unit. From Bach to Vaughn Williams, to spirituals, folk tunes, foreign languages, and music from all around the globe, our ears were opened! What a gift!

A particular highlight was getting to sing in the annual "Live Christmas Tree" concert at the Tivoli Theater in downtown Chattanooga. One Christmas season we played singing shepherds in "Amahl and the Night Visitors", the Gian Carlo Menotti opera about the serendipitous arrival of the Magi to Amahl's humble desert home.

The mayor proclaimed the choir "Good Will Ambassadors", and we took that good will in concert form to schools, retirement homes, psychiatric wards, and eventually on the road, leading all of us wide-eyed Tennessee boys to the 1964 World's Fair! On tour we sang in churches and cathedrals, from West Virginia, to Washington, to St Thomas on 5th Ave, and on up to West Point for the soldiers-to-be. Singing in all of those hallowed spaces and offering the ineffable joy and power of music to so many souls taught me the priceless value of reaching out to others with my God-given talent, and the uplifting feeling of making a group offering for a shared outcome.

Fast forward, to these many years, with musical experiences of all stripes under my belt, and you'll find me faithful to my choral roots here at St A's; ever finding unity and comfort in the familiar hymns and service music, and rediscovering the love, charity and hopeful resilience of our church body each week.

The world can feel pretty dark these days – divided, unjust, and disheartening. We need as much light, beauty, and joy in our lives as we can get! St. A's is a place where we welcome all, work together, and unite to make a glorious noise. A choir of contribution, a chorus of benevolence, and a human symphonic 'Ode to Joy'. Seeking harmony, working through dissonance, and savoring the joyful resolution.

Please choose the part you'd like to sing in our 'chorus' of grateful siblings in Christ, by filling out your pledge card, and raise your own voice, (fortissimo!), in support of our beloved church home's future.

Peace and harmony,
Mark Mitchell

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth! + Psalm 100:1