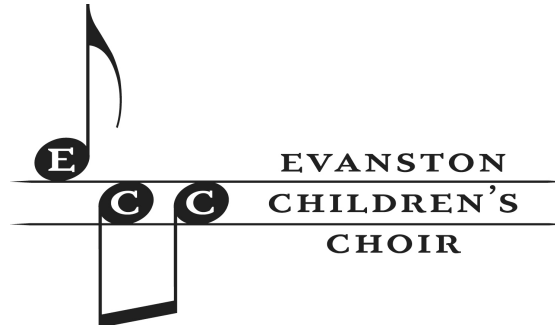


GUIDELINES & INFO for the 2023-2024 SEASON

11/10/23



Office:

2110 Warren St.
Evanston, IL 60202-1954

Gary Geiger, Artistic Director:

(847) 733-0814
gary@evanstonchildrenschoir.org

Bryan Johnson, Assoc. Director:

(312) 841-4445
bjteaching@gmail.com

Home Rehearsal Location:

Noyes Cultural Arts Center
927 Noyes St., Studio 107
Evanston, IL 60201

Sarah Bartolome, Assoc. Director:

(847) 491-8948
sarah.bartolome@northwestern.edu

Delaney Roberts, Assoc. Director:

delaneyrobertsvoice@gmail.com

CHOIR STRUCTURE

Overview:

The Evanston Children's Choir (ECC) accepts young people grades 1-12 with treble-range voices among our various Choirs, from all over the Greater Chicago area. Our **Concert Choir** (advanced) accepts singers grades 3-12, by audition. **Youth Chorale Pops** (mixed-level beginner/intermediate) accepts kids grades 1-8. **Story Choir** (beginner) is geared towards grades 1-5. The ECC also runs an in-school choral program at **Pope John XXIII School** in Evanston for grades 3-6. Only the Concert Choir requires an audition.

The Concert Choir and Pope John XXIII School Choir are directed by Gary Geiger, and each rehearses twice a week. The Youth Chorale Pops, directed by Sarah Bartolome, rehearses once a week. Story Choir meets once a week as well (see "REHEARSALS" on p. 2). Parents and visitors are generally welcome to observe rehearsals, although we may restrict this as health protocols call for.

In addition to his role as Artistic Director, Gary Geiger is also the Administrative Director of the ECC. The ECC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, FEIN 77-0690419. Its operations are overseen by a Board of Directors.

Semesters/Sessions:

Our season consists of two semesters for most of our Choirs, and three shorter sessions for Story Choir, coinciding with the school year. **Fall Semester** began Tuesday, September 5th, 2023 and ends with our December 8th Holiday Concert. **Winter/Spring Semester** begins Monday, January 8th, 2024, and ends with our Spring Concert on May 19th. Story Choir's sessions run mid-October to mid-December, early January to early March, and mid-March to mid-May. The ECC goes on hiatus every summer.

Tuition & Fees:

Tuition per singer for the 2023-2024 Season is \$495 per semester for Concert Choir, \$255 per semester for Youth Chorale, and \$195 per 8-week session of Story Choir. There is a 30% tuition discount for additional siblings in the Youth Chorale or Story Choir, and a 50% tuition discount for additional siblings in the Concert Choir. There is no fee for students participating in the Pope John XXIII (PJ23) School Choir. Concert Choir, Youth Chorale and the PJ23 School Choir require ECC-issued uniforms for performing, while Story Choir does not. There is a one-time uniform charge of \$125 for new Concert Choir members and \$25 for new Youth Chorale members. The ECC never turns any family away because of money, using an "honors system sliding scale" with respect to tuition and fees. **We ask parents/guardians in need of financial assistance to simply tell us what they can afford, and pay only that amount.** We want to be accessible to everyone. See the "Payment & Volunteer Options" page of the Registration Form, and "How the ECC Is Funded" on p. 4.

Refunds for any ECC Choir will be issued if requested within the first 2 weeks of a new semester, or within the first 2 weeks of when a singer joins. No refunds will be given as of the 3rd rehearsal of a semester or the 3rd rehearsal after which a singer joins.

REHEARSALS

Who, What, When & Where:

Concert Choir (Gary Geiger, Director); Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes St., Evanston, Rm. 107

- Tuesdays, 4:15-5:45 and
- Thursdays, 4:15-5:15 (**twice a week**)
- **1st Winter/Spring Semester rehearsal: Tuesday, January 9th, 2024**

Youth Chorale Pops (Sarah Bartolome, Director); Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes St., Evanston, Rm. 107

- Mondays, 4:15-5:15
- **1st Winter/Spring Semester rehearsal: Monday, January 8th, 2024**

Story Choir (Delaney Roberts, Director); The Musical Offering, 743 Custer St., Evanston, Madison Room

- Fridays, 4:15-5:15
- **1st Winter Session rehearsal: Friday, January 12th, 2024**
- **1st Spring Session rehearsal: Friday, March 15th, 2024**

Pope John XXIII School Choir (Gary Geiger, Director); on school campus, for Pope John XXIII students only

- Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00
- **Rehearsals proceed in accordance with the school calendar.**

The ECC routinely exceeds health protocols recommended in relation to communicable illnesses at our rehearsals and events.

The complete rehearsal schedule for each semester will be posted on our website (see "ECC ONLINE" on p. 5). Rehearsals may be extended close to performances or the culmination of a project, and once in a while an extra one may be added. These changes will all be announced as they come up. **Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping up with the rehearsal schedule.**

Rehearsal Guidelines:

- **Symptoms:** Nobody showing symptoms of any communicable illness should show up to a rehearsal. Singers showing signs of such an illness will be sent home.
- **Face Masks:** When masks are required, they must cover nose and mouth.
- **Attendance:** Consistent attendance is crucial. We can only achieve what we do if our singers show up consistently.
- **General Conduct:** The ECC is very fortunate to have residencies in the Noyes Cultural Arts Center, The Musical Offering and Pope John XXIII School. Singers are expected to treat the staff, other residents and students at our rehearsal locations with respect at all times. Misbehavior in or around our rehearsal locations may threaten our relationships and can't be allowed.
- **Attention & Focus:** A particularly high level of focus and attentive participation is expected of singers in the Concert Choir. Consistent lack of attention or disruptive/distracting behavior may necessitate a singer being removed from Concert Choir.
- **Water & Snacks:** Singers should bring a water bottle to rehearsal. We ask that students generally do not eat snacks in the rehearsal rooms during down time, for the sake of those who may have food allergies.
- **Bathroom:** While we accommodate bathroom requests during rehearsals, we do expect singers to try to go beforehand to minimize disruptions.
- **Cell Phones & Other Distractions:** Cell phones must be turned off during rehearsal time, save for exceptions allowed by the director. Singers caught during rehearsal using cell phones or other devices, or otherwise disengaging from the rehearsal process, may be asked to sit out the remainder of rehearsal. Repeat infractions will result in a discussion with parents, and may ultimately jeopardize a singer's standing in a particular Choir. We take this one very seriously.
- **Music Binders & Folders:** Singers may receive sheet music in a binder or folder to be brought to and from rehearsals.
- **Pick-up:** While waiting to be picked up after rehearsal, we prefer that singers stay inside the building until they see a parent or other trusted adult (or that person's car) waiting outside. The ECC and its staff can't be responsible for singers once they leave the building. Please be sure your singers have clear instructions from you as to where you expect them to be, or to go, right after rehearsal.

Rehearsal Attendance:

Consistent attendance at rehearsals is one of the most important things to us, as is communication with your director if your singer has to miss something. We know that sometimes, often for a stretch of time, circumstances in your lives may make it particularly difficult for your singer to attend rehearsals and/or performances. If you are experiencing such difficulties, *please tell your director*. Perhaps we can help (e.g. with coordinating rides). Communication is the key, and we are very patient and understanding about life difficulties if you simply let us know they exist for you. That said, there are understandably times when a singer simply must miss rehearsal—due to illness, a special religious event, etc. We just ask that you please not skip rehearsals lightly. **If your singer must miss a rehearsal, please:**

- **NOTIFY your director beforehand, or very soon afterwards.**
- **Give a REASON for the absence.**

If your singer just doesn't show up, or if you tell us "they're not coming" with no reason, we don't know what to think. Also, **we ask that such communication come directly from the parent or guardian of the singer in question.** Keep in mind that singers who miss several rehearsals in a semester may be required to sit out for certain songs during a given performance, or perhaps sit out an entire performance, depending on the material they have missed. Singers who miss too many rehearsals for any reason may fall too far behind to the point that they might have to sit out for the remainder of a semester or session.

Weekly Emails and Notes to Parents/Guardians:

Once a week, typically within 24 hours after every rehearsal (after the Tuesday rehearsal for Concert Choir), parents/guardians of singers in our Choirs will receive an email "check-in" from the ECC. These emails will often contain an **attached note** with information about coming events, any recent issues, etc. **These notes are the ECC's primary means of communication with you** about times & places of performances, special events, volunteer requests, administrative matters, changes in plans—basically all things ECC. These notes can also be viewed any time on our website by clicking on the **Members** section of the site, then clicking on **Notes to Parents/Guardians** (see "ECC ONLINE" on p. 5). You will be given a password for the **Members** section of the site. Please make it a habit to check your email and/or the website for notes on or soon after rehearsal days, looking for an email with "ECC" in the subject line, and be sure to check your "bulk" or "junk" mail inboxes too since these group messages often end up there. **Parents: please read these notes and any other ECC emails thoroughly. If you don't keep up with the notes, you won't know what's going on.** If you do not have email access, please let us know so we can give you notes in paper form.

PERFORMANCES

Overview:

The Concert Choir is our primary performing choir. Concert Choir typically has anywhere from 8-12 bookings each season, while Youth Chorale might have 3-4 performances in a season. Story Choir concludes each of its sessions with a small, "in-house" performance. The Pope John XXIII School Choir may perform at school-related events, and will also typically perform at the ECC's major end-of-semester Holiday and Spring Concerts (see below).

Our season is structured around our two biggest self-produced annual concerts: the Holiday Concert in mid-December and the Spring Concert in late May. The ECC Concert Choir, Youth Chorale Pops and Pope John XXIII School Choirs will participate in those two concerts. In-between our Holiday and Spring Concerts, other Concert Choir performance bookings will always be announced well in advance as they arise. Regardless of how many or how few are booked, **ECC singers are generally expected to participate in all scheduled performances. Singers may be excused from a performance for a serious reason, but this must be discussed well in advance with your director. "No show" absences at performances are taken very seriously,** and a discussion with the singer's family may be necessary in order for that singer to remain with the group. Think of choir as a "team sport." Our singers all depend on one another!

ECC Performance Schedule:

Each Choir will be notified about any given upcoming performance via the weekly e-mailed notes, usually more than once. The full Performance Schedules for all Choirs are posted on our website (see "ECC ONLINE" on p. 5). This list contains a summary of dates, times, and locations of upcoming performances for each Choir. These may be updated periodically in any semester.

Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping up with the performance schedule. It is critical that you inform your director if you do not have e-mail access, so you can be notified some other way about upcoming performances.

The "**CALL TIME**" on the list refers to the time that singers should have *already arrived* at a given location before a performance. The time between the call time and actual performance is crucial for warming up, reviewing our material and cues, and going over logistics.

A "**CHECKLIST PICK-UP**" is a procedure we follow at many performances, particularly for performances at which most choir parents may not be present. If a Checklist Pick-up is indicated on the Performance Schedule, we ask that all parents or carpooling chaperones please check in with the director or another designated staff member or volunteer when picking up your kids, so we can check each singer off on our list and make sure each is safely accounted for.

PROMOTION to CONCERT CHOIR

Youth Chorale Pops is the ECC's primary training group. We encourage singers who join Youth Chorale to stay in that group for the duration of the season in which they join. If your singer is interested in moving up to Concert Choir for the following season, please let Sarah know. At the end of the season, Sarah and Gary will discuss any potential promotees, considering factors like attendance, ability level, and rehearsal behavior/focus. Then we will follow up with you. We do consider some mid-season promotions, so if you believe strongly that you would like your singer to move up to Concert Choir before Winter/Spring Semester, please let Sarah know before December. She and Gary will discuss, and we will follow up with you.

UNIFORMS

Overview:

The uniform for Youth Chorale consists basically of a gold (yellow) T-shirt with the ECC logo. The uniform for the Pope John XXIII Choir is a blue T-shirt with its own special logo. The Concert Choir uniform consists of a black blazer with our logo, black skirts/pants, a yellow Oxford shirt with our logo and a black necktie or criss-cross tie. Singers should refrain from wearing any accessories that stick out too much, such as huge bracelets, long & chunky necklaces, etc. Hair should be tied back or somehow affixed so singers are not tempted to brush it from their faces or otherwise mess with it onstage, especially in the case of an outdoor performance where the wind might kick up. Please choose stable, comfortable shoes that stay securely fastened to your singer's feet. High heel and platform shoes are prohibited, as they are dangerous on stairs and risers, and can interfere with walking swiftly and smoothly on and off stage in formation.

Formal vs. Casual:

For each performance, the appropriate dress will be indicated as either "formal" or "casual," as follows:

- **Formal dress:** For Concert Choir members, formal dress is our black blazer, black skirt/pants, black tie/criss-cross, yellow Oxford shirt, plus your own black socks/hose and black dress shoes. For our other Choirs, unless otherwise indicated, formal dress is the logoed T-shirt with your own black dress bottoms, black socks/hose, and black dress shoes. Members of Choirs with T-shirt uniforms should wear skirts or pants that the shirts can be tucked into. **Any singer who shows up to a formal performance not in full uniform (including black socks/hose & shoes) may not be able to perform.**
- **Casual dress:** The Concert Choir's casual uniform will simply be the Oxford shirt normally worn under the blazer, plus any casual bottoms. For our other Choirs, this means the logoed T-shirt with any casual bottoms (e.g. jeans). We would typically dress casual at events like our Spring Fundraiser, or perhaps a street fair or radio broadcast. Even with casual dress, singers should still wear bottoms that shirts can be tucked into, and still avoid problematic shoes.

Uniform Cost, Fees:

The cost of the gold polo shirt for Youth Chorale is \$25. The cost of the full Concert Choir uniform is \$125. Any ECC family that cannot afford the required uniform will be given a loaner uniform. All loaner uniforms are to be returned to the ECC at the end of the season, or if the singer leaves the ECC. For any family paying less than full tuition, the uniform will automatically be considered a loaner. Youth Chorale families must provide their own black dress bottoms, and all families must provide their singers with their own black socks/hose and black dress shoes as described above in "Formal vs. Casual."

Our intent is that families only pay once for any given uniform. When a singer grows out of their uniform, simply let us know and we will up-size you at no cost if the uniform is returned in good condition, for as long as that singer is in that particular Choir. If any component of a singer's uniform becomes damaged or lost, parents are responsible for the cost of its replacement.

BINDERS & FOLDERS

Each Concert Choir singer will be given an assigned 3-ring binder to use each semester, containing that semester's repertoire. Our other Choirs may utilize music binders or folders as well, although sometimes we simply distribute and collect sheet music within rehearsals. All music binders, folders and sheet music remain property of the ECC. We ask that singers do not take music in and out of the binders and folders because the binder rings bend, the folder fasteners get messed up, and the music gets lost. The binder/folder is used primarily during rehearsals. Choir members with personal music binders may take them home for practice, which we encourage. Periodically, often before performances, your director may *require* all singers to take their binders/folders home to practice, usually to work on memorizing words. Almost all of our performing is done from memory. Choir families are responsible for the \$25 replacement cost of any distributed binder/folder and its contents if lost or destroyed. Families in any Choir may opt to purchase a set of music outright for \$25.

HOW THE ECC IS FUNDED:

The Evanston Children's Choir is funded primarily through a combination of tuition, subcontracting fees and fundraising efforts, plus a few other minor sources. All are essential to the health and success of our organization.

We depend significantly on parent involvement both in fundraising and volunteering in order to keep tuition costs affordable, to offer concerts to the community free of charge, and to continue the promise that no singer is ever turned away from the ECC due to the inability to pay tuition. We ask that families who become part of the ECC's core program (Concert Choir or Youth Chorale Pops) do so with the understanding that **your participation is essential**, and we ask families and singers to make a good faith effort to contribute to the extent that you are able in order to help maintain the ECC. This may include making a contribution to our Annual Fund Drive, selling raffle tickets or donating items or services to our silent auction as part of our Spring Fundraiser, and/or volunteering to help in some capacity with our fundraising efforts.

We ask that everyone please fill out the “Payment & Volunteer Options” portion of the Registration Form. There you can choose one of three payment options:

1. **Pay standard tuition and fees**
2. **Pay standard tuition and fees plus an additional donation**
3. **Request financial assistance**

You will also see a list of potential ways you can volunteer throughout the season. We encourage you to indicate preferences as to what you might be willing and able to do when the need arises.

ECC ONLINE*:

While we encourage you to check out our Facebook page and “like” us ☺, please note that our Facebook page is **NOT the official source of information for ECC families. Please always check the ECC website (below) for performance and rehearsal information, notes from your director, etc.*

www.evanstonchildrenschoir.org

This is our official website. It contains a wealth of information about the ECC for parents and the general public alike. The most important section on the site for you can be entered via the navigation on the far upper right called “**Members**,” which gives you online access to all the info you need as ECC parents. This section of the site is password protected, so please contact us for login information. For ECC parents, the website is a back-up resource in case you can’t find notes sent via email, and it is a convenient way to get any information about anything ECC-related, from any computer at any time. So, if you click on **Members** you will see the following sub-headings open up:

Members

- Notes to Parents/Guardians**
- Performance Schedule**
- Rehearsal Schedule**

Here is what you will find by clicking on each of those sub-headings:

- **Notes to Parents/Guardians:** This is a complete log of notes to parents for all Choirs for each season, arranged chronologically with the most recent at the top. These are copies of any notes attached to our weekly emails.
- **Performance Schedule:** This is kept 100% current and repeats the performance information which will always be sent to you directly via email. Note that this schedule also has call times, dress code and drop-off/pick-up information for each performance that our member families need to know. Our site’s Events page does not provide this information.
- **Rehearsal Schedule:** This is a complete rehearsal schedule for each Choir, posted for each semester or session.

You can also conveniently download our Registration Form and a copy of these *Guidelines and Information for the 2023-2024 Season* directly from this section, plus find convenient contact links to ECC staff.

The ECC MISSION STATEMENT:

The **Evanston Children’s Choir** was founded on the belief that we can share in each other’s cultures and celebrate our differences through music. The ECC learns and performs both sacred and secular songs from a wide variety of cultures, ethnicities, traditions and genres, in multiple languages. Our mission is not only to sing a diverse repertoire of music, but also to involve a diverse group of children in the process and to share this music with a diverse array of people. We believe strongly in accessibility and inclusion, and we strive to break through boundaries often created by race, class, religion, and other socio-economic forces. Rehearsals are conducted passionately with a philosophy of positive reinforcement and mutual respect. We believe that multicultural artistic endeavors such as this educate the human mind and enrich the human spirit in a way that few other things can.

The Evanston Children’s Choir is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.