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Chorus of Light



NEWS OF NOTE



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CORO LUX

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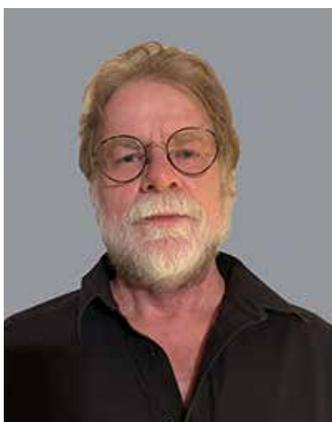
Performances by other local music organizations
Find out about their future concert schedules and cyber events

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Kirsten Norman leads you through our December newsletter.

Welcome back to another edition of the *Coro Lux* monthly newsletter! I hope this message finds you well. As of this writing, the state of New Mexico is hilariously undecided on which season to settle into. Is it fall? Winter? Still summer? Who knows! Fortunately, the calendar, providing a modicum of certainty, is quite insistent on the holiday season fast approaching. Normally this



Dr. Joe Alcorn

would be a period of activity and triumph for choral singing and performances. Yet we are in far from normal times as Covid-19 rages across the country, causing musicians' activities to go virtual along with other parts of life. For a timely and authoritative update on the state of the virus, go to Dr. Joe Alcorn's article. In this month's report, Dr. Alcorn warns of early

endorsements of promising drugs that don't always pan out, and tells us the general advice on what represents a risky exposure has been updated.

In that spirit of hope, *Coro Lux* has prepared some wonderful and uplifting pieces for you this month. Artistic Director Bradley Ellingboe writes about the upcoming JanFest '21, a yearly choral festival co-sponsored by *Coro Lux* that will be virtual for the first time! LaVonne Yazzie has written a truly delightful interview with soprano Quynh Truong. Our other interview is with tenor Jonathan Davidson by Ashley Jonkman, where you can learn how Jonathan teaches high school virtual choir (spoiler: it is not easy).

While we move through the challenges of the season, I am reminded of Morten Lauridsen's encouraging words when asked about pursuing composition: "forge on!" And so, with hope in our step and music in our hearts, we "forge on" through this month and beyond.

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There's a time for applause, and a time for a helping hand

Although many of our activities have been curtailed by the need to quarantine, nonetheless, our expenses continue. As we do everything in our power to emerge from this pandemic as a healthy organization, we ask that you consider making a contribution. **Coro Lux is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and all donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.**

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https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7MYTsW_bnjJun31GBHjwjQ



LaVonne Yazzie



Interviewing Coro Lux Soprano Quynh Nguyen

By LaVonne Yazzie

I'm thrilled to interview you. Where are you from?

I was born in Tacoma, Washington. My family and I moved here to Albuquerque when I was two years old. I have two sisters and one brother. My grandmother has ten children, and all of my mother's family is also here in the city. We are blessed.

What do you do for work?

I work in the pediatric intensive care unit at Presbyterian Downtown as a registered nurse. I currently work full-time, but I'm hoping to go part-time with the new baby.

Congratulations on your baby boy! How is motherhood treating you?

Thank you! Our son's name is Oliver, but we often call him Ollie or Olie, which means "olive" in Vietnamese. It's not his actual Vietnamese name, it's just a nickname. Motherhood has been so good, just dealing with less sleep of course. I have definitely needed more caffeine in my life. It's so much fun to watch him grow and I love to see the connections he's making every day. Currently, his favorite toys are the TV remote and all the cardboard boxes. In all this madness, we also got a new puppy named Toki.

What else is new for you and your family during this wild year that is 2020?



Quynh Nguyen

My husband, Cuong Truong, just opened a new business called Neko Neko, which mean "cat" in Japanese. It is located in the Sawmill Market, which is a food hall establishment. A food hall is a cool, new concept for Albuquerque, and it's well-known out-of-state where it's more popular in bigger cities like Los Angeles and Denver. It's a style of dining based on self-service.

(continued on the following page)



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We applaud Coro Lux.

Supporting your community is important to you — and to us. That's why we're committed to helping you make a difference.



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(Quynh interview continued)

Congratulations on the new business! How did you decide on a food business?

My parents own May Cafe, and my husband also worked there years ago, so food has always been a part of our family. My husband has always done mini-business activities, and ultimately, his dream has always been owning his own business. He was a respiratory therapist, but he decided to quit his job to open the business. I encouraged him to go for it. I told him, "All these years you have been talking about it, and you should just go for it!"

What was the inspiration behind Neko Neko?

Over the last few years, we have taken multiple trips to Japan, where we spent our honeymoon. We fell in love with taiyaki, Japanese inspired desserts that are shaped like little fishes. The concept for Neko Neko is Japanese fusion dessert. The waffle cone fishes are fun, and it's easy to dress them up with soft serve and other appealing toppings. I always joke that beyond being an ancillary support, an RN at home, and a new mother, I am also the waffle batter maker!

I am so happy for you and your family! I have always wondered, how did you come to be a soprano in *Coro Lux*?

When I was in high school at Manzano High School, I participated in the various choirs at my school and in all-state choir. I was so inspired during my all-state concert, that I decided to become a music major during my very first semester of college, until music theory made me switch majors (laughs). Even after pursuing nursing, I sang in University Choir for the next year and a half with Brad Ellingboe, and I continued to sing while I finished my bachelor's in science.

What is your favorite *Coro Lux* performance?

I've only been with *Coro Lux* for a short time, but it has been so fulfilling to do something that I love that is not career-based. My favorite concert was *Considering Matthew Shepard*. My parents came to that concert, and they hadn't seen me sing in such a long time. They were incredibly impressed, and that was special to have them share in that experience.

For those of us planning to visit Neko Neko, what do you recommend we try?

Our most popular flavor is vanilla, and I personally love the matcha pineapple swirl with crushed Oreos. Recently, we just featured a new black sesame flavor. The toasted coconut topping is fantastic, and the sweet bean flavors are a staple in Asian cuisine. Honestly, anything you try there will be delicious!

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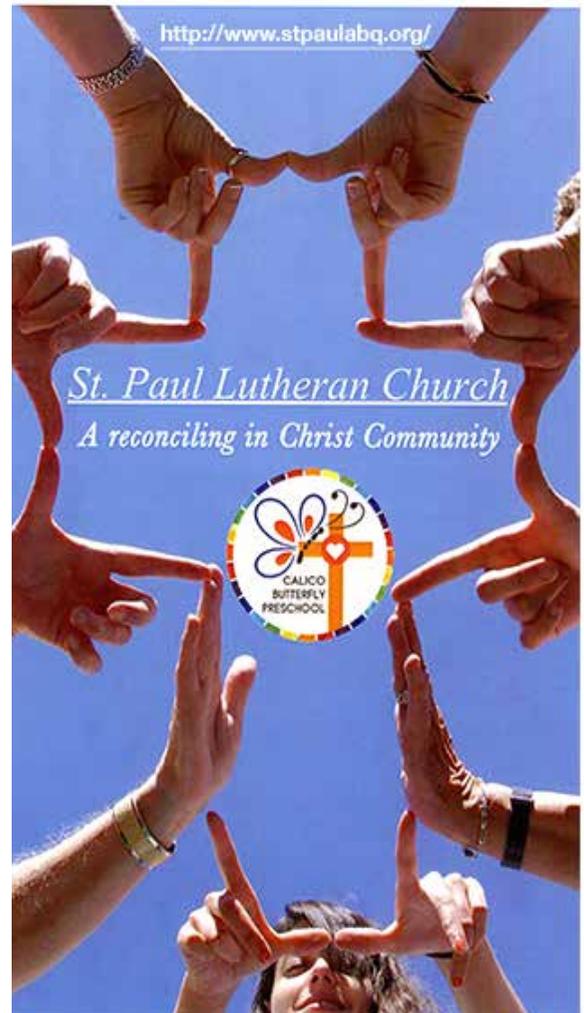
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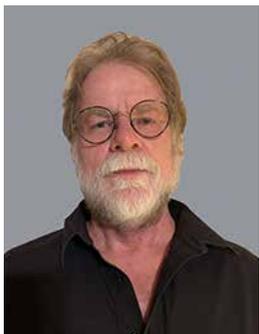
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Dr. Joe Alcorn offers the very latest information on covid-19, updating last month's article

Having spent some ink on processes and mechanisms in previous letters, this time we'll (mostly) highlight some 'new' understandings that are perhaps worthy of contemplation. Spoiler:

- The general advice on what represents a risky exposure has been updated.
- Drugs that look promising don't always pan out so beware of "early endorsement";
- And keeping hospitals decompressed MAY be one reason treatment success has increased in the last 6 months.

As for singers, we still await either an utterly reliable 'same day' test of infectiousness or the demonstration of robust immunity by reliable directed antibody testing.

1) On October 22nd the CDC made some revisions to its COVID-19 recommendations. Perhaps the most easily overlooked was the redefinition of high risk exposure as 15 minutes within a 6 foot distance from an infectious person ("infectious" meaning within two days prior to symptoms or positive test results until isolation) taking place **within 24 hours**. In other words, if there was 5 minutes of exposure in the morning and 5 more in the afternoon and again in the evening, the risk of infection is considered high. Some of the problems in rendering ANY kind of firm definition of 'risk' (given variability in viral exhalation, air filtration, etc., as discussed in earlier newsletters) are reviewed along with these revisions of late May definitions here: (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>). The important thing conceptually is the notion that while there is clearly SOME minimal number of inhaled SARS Co-V2 particles required to get past our pulmonary defenses, that number does not need to be acquired all at once. Data increasingly suggest that severity of illness is influenced by the number of infectious particles inhaled (among other things) but even the minimum number required for initiation of infection could take place incrementally and cumulatively from several sources.

For a lucid brief article exploring why some people with the disease are more infectious than others, see <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/10/why-people-are-coronavirus-superspre-how-body-emits-infectious-particles/#close> (Continued on following page)



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(Covid continued)

2) Every now and then there is a spectacular advance in disease treatment of unmistakable value. Penicillin comes to mind. It didn't cure every febrile illness. But if you had a penicillin-sensitive bacterial infection, the impact was nearly miraculous. Of course, if you'd run a Trial of Penicillin on a cohort of febrile patients most of whom had diseases OTHER than penicillin-sensitive infection, you might have seen so little impact that you would have given up on the agent. Even with remarkable agents, the proof of efficacy really DOES take some rigorous work. After all, within the natural history of a single confirmed infectious disease - say COVID-19 - there are "stages." A first stage appears to be getting a minimal infectious dose started penetrating and disrupting the lining of the respiratory system. There is another 'stage' as the virus gains access to blood and travels elsewhere in the body. And there is also the 'phase' of immunologic reaction - which may in some cases be 'over-reactive' with collateral damage as a result. If you tested a drug that ONLY inhibited viral entry into the respiratory system on patients who were way past that phase, even a very good drug might look ineffective having unwittingly been used at the 'wrong time' in the process of infection. Recruiting patients with all of humanity's glorious diversity and yet in cohorts homogeneous enough to sort out 'phase' sensitivity is not easy and takes time. Unfortunately the political process is not very patient. This isn't surprising - sometimes policy decisions have to be made with less than perfect command of the facts. At this point it appears that prematurely touted treatments including convalescent plasma and hydroxy chloroquine are of no, or negligible, value in COVID-19 at ANY stage. And now the first drug approved for treatment, Remdesivir, has had its value called into question in a large multi-center European trial showing no impact on mortality or length of hospital stay or need for ICU treatment

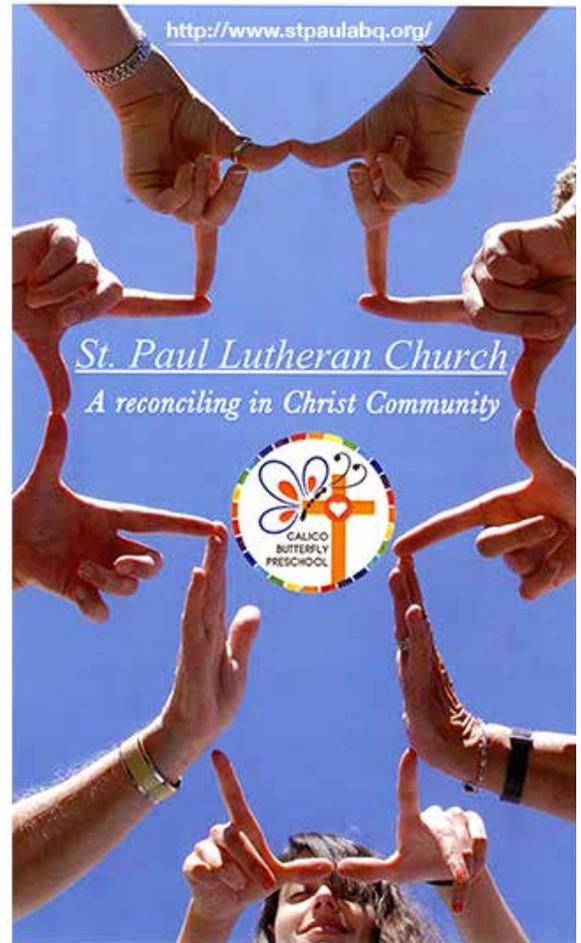
(<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.10.15.20209817v1>).

A very readable summary and critique elsewhere points out inconsistencies in the several trials cited in the original FDA approval process (prior to completion of this European report) and the seeming haste for an agent which, at best, shortened hospital stays for mildly ill patients with no apparent impact on survival .

(https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/10/very-very-bad-look-remdesivir-first-fda-approved-covid-19-drug?utm_source=Nature%20Briefing&utm_campaign=1abac710dc-briefing-dy-20201029&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c9dfd39373-1abac710dc-44346929)

The take home point is that the value of the scientific method is in its self-correcting nature, in corroboration or refutation. "Truth" accretes and early results are provisional results. That they are NOT corroborated doesn't mean fraud or bad faith - Remdesivir certainly seemed to be promising when its

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(Covid continued)

employment was in the test tube. But trials in humans are very difficult to do and rarely does a single trial tell the whole story. The knowledge we have about the VIRUS SARS CoV2 less than a year after discovery is astonishing. But how we understand the ILLNESS COVID-19, the interaction of a 'simple' virus in a very complex human host is going to take time. For now, the jury is out on the only treatment so far with FDA approval but the outlook for a central role in effective treatment of the disease doesn't look good.

3) There is nothing about SARS CoV-2 that suggests it "comes in waves." But the human response to the virus can waver, and we now see increased hospitalizations around the country, suggesting the impact of "Covid Fatigue." Nationally, new cases have never been higher, but as of the end of October the death rate is not as high as it was in the Spring. Why is that? In part it is probably better understanding of bedside care, particularly optimizing oxygenation and minimizing the complications of thrombosis or clots. It may also be because the very most vulnerable people were lost already back in the Spring and there is evidence that where the use of masks is more reliable, those infections that still DO take place start with smaller numbers of virus and lower severity. (<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM2026913>) However, there remains a lingering concern that the death rate among hospitalized patients could rise again if the improvement was largely or significantly due to 'de-stressing' hospitals by having had fewer patients (reviewed here: <https://www.vox.com/2020/10/28/21528116/covid-19-death-rates-hospitalizations-icu-beds>). Anybody who has worked in a hospital and particularly in an ICU will agree there are a staggering number of parameters to monitor and address, and the more harried the provider, the more easily important monitoring or care is delayed or falls through the cracks.

If our incomplete understanding of both long term health consequences after COVID-19 recovery, as well as duration of post-convalescent immunity weren't enough, the possibility that hospital saturation could mean higher death rates should be enough to fortify the resolve. **Keep on masking and distancing!** Sure, most people at any age survive. But the potential for safe and durable immunity in 2021 is still strong. Why stumble now so close to the finish line?

And by the way, if you want a readily available tool for establishing if an indoor setting has adequate air circulation, then a \$150 CO2 monitor reading above 900 is probably a good reason to stay outside. (<https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/10/28/1011261/how-to-make-restaurants-safer/>)

Next month let's make it Q&A. Send questions to Joe_alcorn@msn.com

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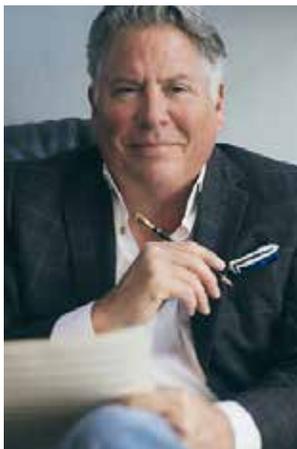
Lauridsen interview



Rutter's "Magnificat"

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Bradley Ellingboe



**Announcing
Janfest '21
with musical
headliner
Dr. Rollo Dilworth**

By Bradley Ellingboe

Although much has been cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic, one silver lining – as we acclimate ourselves to holding events virtually – is we are less hampered by issues of travel, housing, and even time and space! Specifically I'm speaking of our upcoming 3rd annual celebration of the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., or "JanFest," as we have nicknamed it.

Co-sponsored by *Coro Lux* and the United Church of Santa Fe, this year's celebration will be held virtually from approximately 9 am to 5 pm on Saturday, January 16, 2021. Plans are still being firmed up as I write this note (3 months in advance of the event itself), but please know there will be ample time for rest between video sessions.

The silver lining referred to above is that, since we're meeting virtually, we're able to offer sessions from experts scattered across the country. Moreover, even if you cannot "attend" on January 16th, the sessions will be available *On Demand* until the end of January. Hence, our 3rd Annual JanFest is able to overcome constraints of time and travel.



Dr. Rollo Dilworth

Next month's newsletter will provide further details about the exciting line-up we're able to offer in this fashion, but for now I want to celebrate the accomplishments of our musical headliner, Dr. Rollo Dilworth.

Rollo Dilworth is Professor of Music Education and Vice Dean at the Boyer College of Music of Temple University in

(Continued on next page)

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Janfest (continued)

Philadelphia. Born in 1970, Dr. Dilworth has published more than 200 choral compositions, as well as written or co-authored three books on choral technique. A frequent guest conductor, he has led 57 all-state choruses. Active internationally, he has led festivals or taught master classes in Australia, Austria, Canada, China, France, Ireland, Singapore and Taiwan.

Dr. Dilworth is currently a board member and former National Board Chair for Chorus America. He is an active life member of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). He also holds memberships with several other organizations, including the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM) and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP). In 2017, he received the Temple University Faculty Award for Research and Creative Achievement.

I believe that every single person has the ability to compose. Whether it's words, whether it's music, or a combination of both. We just have to be quiet enough to listen to what the voice is within. — Dr. Rollo Dilworth

I consider Rollo a friend and know him to be a wonderful musician and a kind and caring gentleman. His sessions for us will include us rehearsing on his compositions, discussions of his own journey as an African American composer of serious music and the various hurdles he's faced in contemporary America, and a final virtual concert.

I encourage you to register for this event without delay. When we started JanFest in 2019, we felt it was a necessary step for both *Coro Lux* and the United Church of Santa Fe. Now, as we deal with the aftermath of the summer of 2020, we wish to do even more to help bring justice and harmony to all.

Earlier this year we adopted a statement on inclusivity that reads as follows: *Coro Lux is built on the ideal of "doing good as we do well." We believe that in diversity there is strength. We believe the voices of the world should be heard, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation. In the past we have used our concerts to call for peace and to benefit charitable causes, and we will redouble our efforts going forward. Through our art we sing for a better world.*

JanFest is very much a part of our mission. We hope you can join us! Go here to register, and pass the word! [Link to registration page](#)

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Interview: Jonathan Davidson, a music director of choirs in the APS system and Coro Lux Associate Conductor

by Ashley Jonkman

Have you ever tried to conduct a high school choir virtually? Jonathan Davidson has! Our assistant conductor has been teaching choir for 4 years, and while (like all of us!) he never expected to include a completely virtual curriculum in his resume, he's making the absolute best of it.

Jonathan is originally from Meridian, Idaho, where he grew up as the youngest of 4 boys. With a musical mom, and completely non-musical dad (he's never even heard his father sing!), Jonathan says all of his brothers have music abilities and talent in their own right. While there was music in his home, Jonathan didn't begin his own music training until middle school band, where he learned to play trumpet. Band wasn't exactly Jonathan's cup of tea, but he loved music and began teaching himself piano. It was in the 7th grade that Jonathan's natural talent began to take hold, and he was asked to join the worship team at church. Up until that point, he'd never even considered singing, but when a friend urged him to try, he discovered he had abilities he'd not even known about.

After that, choir was a huge part of his life. As a sophomore, Jonathan made the top choirs at the high school, and by senior year was involved in every choir at the school—including the women's choir, where he served as accompanist!

Following graduation, his career path was pretty clear, and Jonathan went to Eastern Oregon University to study vocal performance. After undergrad, Jonathan was looking for a smaller, master's level choral conducting program in the Western part of the country, and he landed at UNM after meeting with Brad Ellingboe. Now, he's teaching in a growing music program at Del Norte High School. With 4 choirs and 1 piano lab class, Jona-



Jonathan Davidson

(Continued on next page)



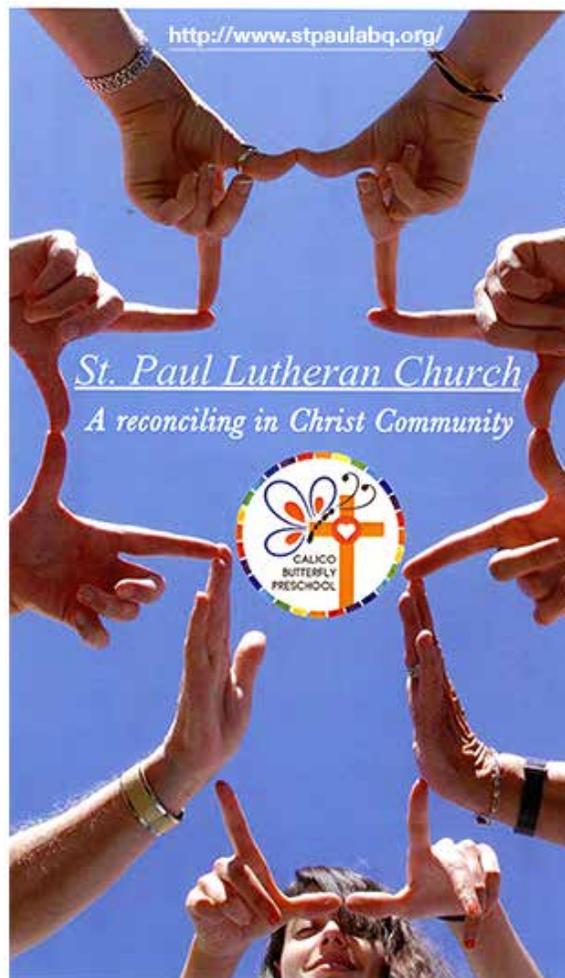
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(Davidson continued)

than is plugging away at building a thriving music program. While Del Norte High School has some unique challenges—the school gave away the most Chromebooks of any school when COVID first closed schools, and has a large transient and refugee population—Jonathan says the program is steadily improving. “I am working towards my dream job, high school is where I want to end up,” he said, enthusiastically.

Like virtually all of us, Jonathan has encountered some new challenges in his career. Teaching choir online isn’t exactly ideal. “The whole idea of togetherness and communal singing is completely gone this year, as well as the anonymity that choral singing provides for kids,” he said. “Choir is all about working toward a goal, and right now, we don’t have any performances or competitions coming up.” While the challenges are great, Jonathan has found ways to engage students, including having them send back recordings of themselves, and working toward a virtual performance. It isn’t what anyone envisioned for this year, but the connections with students and the mutual love for music are holding the program—and its members—together.

Jonathan says some of the benefits of working from home include spending more time with his wife, Shannon, who is a special education teacher at Rio Rancho High School. In addition, he’s seen technology proficiency skyrocket—both in personal lives as well as professionally. When asked what music inspires him personally, Jonathan sheepishly confessed that while he loves singing classical music, he doesn’t listen to it on his own time. While he loves Schubert and Schumann, he loves Ed Sheeran and Kelly Clarkson just as much. “Pop music was lousy for a while, and we’re coming back up on the other side of that now. Pop singers can hold their own as professional singers now.” Personally, Jonathan says, “I’m trained classically. Before conducting, I’m a singer. I sing more in pop style than classical these days. I love to do both and not be locked in.” As far as hobbies go, Jonathan says he loves to cook, play World of Warcraft and relax with his wife. “I’m actually a pretty good cook!” he said with a smile.

Jonathan has been with *Coro Lux* since the 2nd season, as the assistant conductor and frequent soloist. “I love having a choir family that is challenging to my musicianship. I get to be a singer in it and not just a director. I love to be in a choir, and it’s nice to have one that we do challenging music in. Brad has really worked hard over the years to raise the level of professionalism in the group. That’s to credit Brad and his level of commitment to it. I love seeing my friends and building relationships while doing challenging work. We have a community choir feel, with a real sense of professionalism.”

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we’re here to help

We applaud *Coro Lux*.

Supporting your community is important to you — and to us. That’s why we’re committed to helping you make a difference.



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For donors, it is about leaving a legacy and insuring their gifts support the values and causes that are most important to them

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- You must be 70 1/2 at the time of the distribution.
- You may distribute any amount up to \$100,000 per tax year.
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- You may distribute from your traditional IRA and IRRA.
- Charitable distributions from 403(b) plans, 401(k) plans, pension plans or other retirement plans are ineligible.

How do you apply this strategy?

- The distribution proceeds must be paid directly to Coro Lux.
- Charities must receive distributions no later than December 31 of the respective tax year to be considered as a donation to the charity for the year.
- You cannot receive any goods or services in return for the IRA charitable distribution.

Can you use the charitable distribution to meet any required minimum distributions for the year?

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Your financial advisor should work with you and your tax advisor as you evaluate this strategy to determine whether it makes sense in your overall estate plan. [Return to contents page](#)



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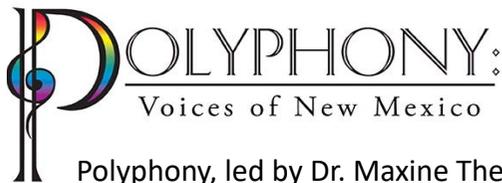
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CORO LUX

News from other organizations



Polyphony, led by Dr. Maxine Thevenot, announces their annual Children's Messiah is going virtual this year. The date of the release of the virtual choir project is set for December 19 at 10:30 am. For more information or to register, go here: www.polyphonym.com



In an early September email and video, Santa Fe's **Sangre de Cristo Chorale** introduced the composer for its latest commissioned work: the multi-talented and interdisciplinary Katie Kring. In its November 4 email and video, the Chorale announced the text for that work, which will be performed at the first in-person concert. Just before Thanksgiving, Chorale members will share Thanksgiving traditions in a video collage. You'll find all videos to date on the Chorale's website (<https://sdcchorale.org/>), where you can sign up for the email list.



The New Mexico Philharmonic Announces the Virtual Performance Series on NMPil Now!

Performers include pianist Olga Kern, violinist Rachel Barton Pine, and guitarist Jason Vieaux

The New Mexico Philharmonic's newest series looks to bridge the gap between our current circumstances and the day we can joyously return to the concert hall. We proudly announce the latest addition to the NMPil Now! virtual platform of events, the Performance Series, an online concert/recital series that will run for 12 weeks starting on November 14. All performances are Saturdays at 6:00 p.m. The Performance Series joins our other NMPil Now! events, Phil the Silence and Wednesday Night Live. Access information at nmpil.org [Return to the contents page](#)



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