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Chorus of Light

NEWS OF NOTE



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CORO LUX

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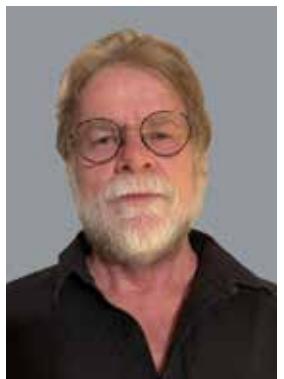
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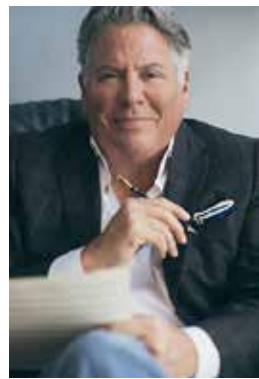
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Giving the highest
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CORO LUX

**Kristen Norman
introduces you to the
informative articles
you'll find in this issue**

Welcome to the June issue of the *Coro Lux* newsletter! As summer is now approaching, we hope everyone is able to enjoy some time outside away from home (if possible, of course) as covid-19 restrictions begin to lift across the country. Singers in New Mexico, including *Coro Lux*, are gathering outside for the first time in over a year. I hope we still recognize each other; zoom certainly isn't the same as real life! In any case, it's certainly going to be a better singing experience compared with last summer.



Linda Buffet

This month, our *Coro Lux* member interview is with alto Linda Buffet. Ashley Jonkman has written a lovely piece about Linda, who has just finished serving on the *Coro Lux* Board for 6 years. LaVonne Yazzie writes about the first virtual *Coro Lux* rehearsal, which took place over YouTube in April. As usual, we have a choral singing covid-19 update from Dr. Joe Alcorn.

He brings us up-to-date with a brief and timely column on the wearing of masks after full vaccination. Finally, in

his monthly update, our Artistic Director Brad Ellingboe discusses *Coro Lux*'s return to regular rehearsals. He also delves into the life of composer Felix Mendelssohn, whose music *Coro Lux* is working with currently. Until next month, stay tuned!



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First *Coro Lux* virtual practice streamed on YouTube for choir members

By LaVonne Yazzie

The first virtual *Coro Lux* practice was held on Tuesday, April 20th, with 50-60 viewers tuning into YouTube to participate in the first live virtual session of Spring 2021. Bradley Ellingboe, accompanied on the piano by Mary Ann Ybarra, led the four SATB section leaders in dissecting pre-selected parts of each choral piece. The singing quartet of section leaders included soprano Shelly Ley, alto Kristen Miller Hutchinson, tenor Jonathan David, and bass Joe Mitchell. Considering that this was the first choir practice in over a year, the virtual session format was kept to roughly under an hour with a time-efficient schedule geared to re-acclimate the voice to singing while generating positive energy over the anticipated upcoming live in-person rehearsals.

Brad began the first warm-up with the usual opening vocal runs of "Sing Legato" (which *Coro Lux* sings at the beginning of every choir practice), before welcoming all choir members back after the long, unexpected 13-month break from singing. Brad laid out the upcoming practice schedule, with April 27th and May 4th both definitively occurring in a virtual setting. Before diving into practice, Brad detailed the protocols that were put into place for these virtual practices to occur: everyone in the church sanctuary participating in the practice session had all been fully vaccinated and the section leaders for each voice part were distanced 10 feet apart out of an overabundance of caution.

As everyone in the church sanctuary was fully vaccinated, the practice was able to be held without masks, in accordance with CDC guidelines detailing that one can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask or staying six feet apart. In the spirit of easing back into singing, Brad reiterated that the purpose of our practices is to sing purely for fun and to help everyone "blow the dust off the [vocal] pipes."

A full body stretching session followed the opening remarks, along with further vocal exercises to complete the choral warm-up. To help facilitate communication between those participating in the

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(Practices Continued)

practice being held in the church sanctuary and those participating virtually through YouTube, a live stream chat was opened for comments. The virtual practices are to be streamed live on YouTube and recorded for later viewing on the *Coro Lux* channel for those choir members unable to tune in for the live session.

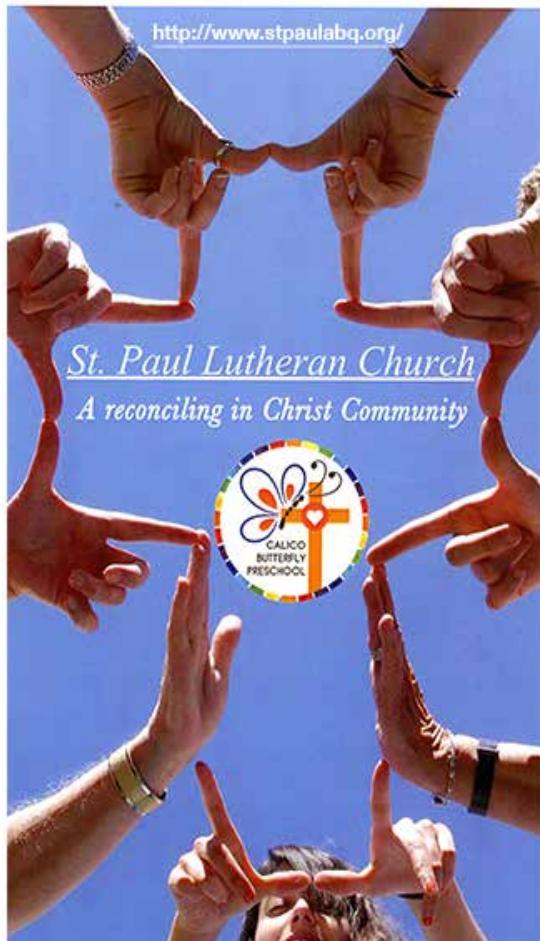
The practice session began by dissecting vocal parts in “I Dream a World” by Rollo Dilworth, which is a musical interpretation of the poem of the same name written by Harlem Renaissance writer Langston Hughes. Brad, Mary Ann, and the *Coro Lux* section leaders patiently worked through the beginning of the piece, displaying the simple rhythms and harmonies in an easy-to-learn manner for those participating from home. Brad stressed the importance of singing the word “world” cautiously, as to avoid the dreaded pirate “R.” As the virtual participants could not hear each other and Brad could not hear them, Brad reiterated the importance of listening to the recordings that were emailed out to help learn the various parts confidently at home.

The next piece on the virtual practice agenda was “He is Watching Over Israel” from Elijah by Felix Mendelssohn, which the section leaders sang confidently under Brad’s direction. Brad cautioned the choir to be careful when singing the lyrics “slumbers not nor sleeps,” giving clear direction to make a clean break between “slumbers” and “not” to convey two separate words. Throughout this piece, Brad emphasized the importance of singing a tempo without lagging or slowing down, which is easy to do with the piano part reminiscent of a lullaby.

The third choral piece on the virtual practice agenda was “The Secret o’Life” by James Taylor in a specific arrangement by Brad Ellingboe. Brad reiterated the importance of counting in this piece, as there are many vocalizations such as “oohs,” “aahs,” and “hmms,” in place of the guitar work on James Taylor’s original piece. The fourth choral piece on the virtual practice agenda was “Oblivion” by Astor Piazzolla from Argentina, with the biggest takeaway from this piece being the importance of Spanish vowel sounds instead of English vowel sounds.

In closing, the much-anticipated first virtual practice of *Coro Lux* was full of positive energy for the future and the hope of an end to the pandemic. The fact that the first virtual practice session was so well-attended bodes well for *Coro Lux* and their collective desire to make beautiful music with one another again. With the Governor of New Mexico anticipating a full re-opening of the state in June 2021, where once *Coro Lux* saw only a closed door, there is now a doorwide open to imagination and possibility.

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CORO LUX

A political animal

By Dr. Joe Alcorn

"Man is by nature a political animal..." - a phrase attributed to Aristotle. And in 2021 America it's easy to think he was talking to us. Little seems to take place that is not then dissected under a political lens. But what Aristotle meant was probably something closer to "Man is an animal whose nature is to live in a Polis" - *polis* being a dynamic city/state such as Athens, with its intense socializing and debating in markets and theaters, on the streets and in public buildings. Which is why sometimes Aristotle's statement is translated as "Man is a Social Animal." And this, too, seems entirely accurate. Who ISN'T excited and relieved to see the impact of SARS CoV 2 mitigation realized in the increased safety of OUR public spaces? Two different translations, both seeming prescient and, either way, Aristotle had our number.

Now the question is how DO we go about being that social animal again without being a dismally political one? Right now around Albuquerque, masks don't seem to arouse the anger they have elicited in some places around the country. But, as vaccination rates increase, will persistent masking create Pariahs? Why WOULD a vaccinated person continue to carry a mask with them? What are the Hermeneutics (a word Aristotle might have used for 'interpretation') of masks in an increasingly post-vaccination society?

Last month we discussed some reasons that vaccine-induced protection against serious COVID-19 did not necessarily protect against mild or asymptomatic illness, nor the propagation of that disease to others who had, for whatever reason, not acquired their own immunity. The unvaccinated are probably the largest slice of that shrinking— but still vulnerable— pie, though there are other slices too: for instance, those with immune suppression. Only about 20% of organ transplant recipients, immune-suppressed to prevent organ rejection, respond to vaccination with antibody levels in the clearly protective range (B Boyarsky et al; JAMA 5/5/21). And in 2019 alone there were nearly 40,000 new transplants in the US.

It's not easy to come up with a precise estimate

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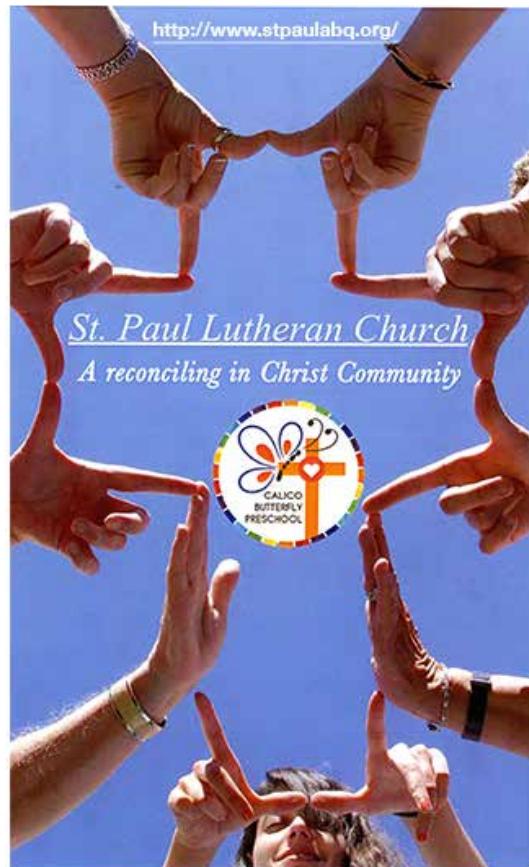
of what the risk is that a vaccinated person might unwittingly pass infection to others. We think this risk is markedly lower than the risk of spread by a NON-vaccinated person, one who is a more hospitable host for viral incubation and, therefore, able to come up with much larger numbers of SARS CoV 2 particles to talk/shout/cough/sneeze/sing into the environment.

But successful spread of infection isn't all about the viral load in the host - it will still depend upon proximity and pathway to the lungs of the next victim, factors altered not just by masks and ventilation but also by the percentage of nearby lungs that are unvaccinated, immune suppressed, or otherwise vulnerable. So to be asked to quote the risk that a vaccinated person walks into a room and infects others is a moving target: risks will fall as more and more of those others are themselves vaccinated.

But what if someone in that room carried an organ transplant? Or was immune-suppressed by medication that made vaccine-induced immunity uncertain? Indeed, what of the 5% or so of patients in vaccine trials who were spared serious disease with hospitalization or complications, but still did acquire COVID-19 in spite of vaccination? Doesn't that imply that even in a group of post-vaccination friends, vulnerabilities persist?

Absolutely! Incomplete vaccine response, viral

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(Political animal continued)

variants, formal immune suppression or idiosyncratic nuances within individuals' immune systems are all factors that preclude sweeping and absolute definitions of contagion risks. Alongside the astonishing accomplishments of Epidemiology and Virology and Vaccine science to control SARS CoV 2, the tangles of illness it causes in humans, (aka COVID-19) are still being unravelled. What we know for certain is that effective vaccination essentially prevents severe COVID-19 cases from resulting in hospitalization, complications, or death. But not all people will obtain that successful vaccination.

With this background and in the interests of being more social and less political, perhaps we can all consider the Hermeneutics of masks a little more broadly. What does it say about a person to be wearing one? Outdoors with social distancing they add little but aren't irrational - especially if distancing is erratic. Outdoors or indoors, amongst *vaccinated people*, what they add in protection is small enough for the CDC to believe they are unnecessary. Vaccinated or not, amongst people of *unknown* vaccination status indoors, masks make it less likely the wearer will become infected - either symptomatically, if vulnerable, or with the unappreciated illness that makes them potentially infectious to others even while feeling well - and are therefore recommended. Special conditions may apply in interpreting masks worn in Operating Rooms or Bank Teller lines. But we need to remember that a person wearing a mask might have a condition of immune suppression or be concerned about bringing infection back to someone with immune suppression. Perhaps a friend or spouse has had an organ transplant and all efforts are being made to minimize that person's exposure.

COVID-19 is no joke. 581,000 Americans have died from the disease and counting. Complications can permanently compromise survivors - lung transplants have now been successfully accomplished for survivors of the virus whose lung scarring was incompatible with life. (A Bharat Lancet Respiratory Medicine, May 1, 2021). Especially given the gravity of this illness, we should recognize that individuals may have strong reasons to include masks in a strategy to minimize their risk of acquiring or transmitting SARS CoV 2. There is no reason to assume vaccine status let alone political affiliation from the election to wear one. Even with vaccination there can be perfectly good reasons to wear one. The socially responsible thing to do is to respect the mask.

(The translation of Athenian sociability into the vision of Democracy that informed our own Founding Fathers - and provided representation only to free men - is another story.)

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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.

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We're on YouTube!



Lauridsen interview



Rutter's "Magnificat"

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CORO LUX

The beginning of regular rehearsals and a look at the great Felix Mendelssohn

By Bradley Ellingboe

Now that we're having regular rehearsals, I've chosen music for us to sing simply for the joy of it. It's unclear as to whether we'll ever perform the things we're working on this spring, but in the meantime, we're singing simply for fun!

Last month I wrote about Astor Piazzolla, the master of the Argentine tango, because we're singing a choral version of his piece "Oblivion." This month I'm going to talk about the great Felix Mendelssohn and his oratorio *Elijah*, since we're singing "He Watching Over Israel," drawn from that masterpiece.

Felix Mendelssohn was born in 1809 and died in 1847. He was descended from a prominent Jewish family. His grandfather, Moses Mendelssohn, was a distinguished Jewish philosopher and his father, Abraham, was a very successful banker. Felix was raised in a non-religious household until he was seven, when he was baptized as a Christian.

His family was extremely wealthy, and when Felix was two years old they left Hamburg, the city of Felix's birth, for fear of a reprisal from the French for the Mendelssohn Bank's role in breaking Napoleon's Continental System blockade. They actually fled Hamburg in disguise, and settled in Berlin, which was also a larger and more cosmopolitan city than Hamburg.

Felix was the second of four children. He was a musical child prodigy, as was his older sister Fanny. At first their father thought it was Fanny's gifts that should be nurtured. However, for a family of that time and place, it was thought improper that a young woman should choose to be a professional musician. By the same token, Abraham was not keen on Felix's aspirations, either— perhaps thinking he should take over the family bank— until Abraham became convinced that Felix's talent and desires were such that he must dedicate his life to music.

The four Mendelssohn children enjoyed the finest of educations, including in music. Their well-to-do home was a salon of visiting musicians, scientists and artists.

Felix made his first public performance as a pianist at the age of nine. He was a prolific composer from an early age and his music was often performed in the home of his parents

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(Mendelssohn continued)

or their wealthy friends as entertainments, with professional musicians hired for the occasion to perform these new works.

It was Felix Mendelssohn who resurrected the music of JS Bach. Before Mendelssohn's time, it was typical that only music of living composers would be performed, and so the music of Bach—a provincial church musician of Leipzig, dead for more than 50 years—had been abandoned. It was Mendelssohn, with his stature (and wealth) who proved to the world that Bach had written music of surpassing genius, not only for his time but for all time. (By the law of unintended consequence that formula is now reversed, and we have symphonic organizations and opera houses that perform old music almost exclusively and rarely program music of living composers.)

Mendelssohn wrote his oratorio *Elijah* (also known as *Elias* in German) in 1848, having been commissioned by the Birmingham (England) Triennial Festival. The libretto was originally in German and was translated into English by William Bartholomew. This was, in fact, a piece that essentially written in English and German at the same time—a rarity!

Mendelssohn was married to Cécile Charlotte Sophie Jeanrenaud, the daughter of a French Reformed (Calvinistic) clergyman and together they had five children. Mendelssohn became very close to the famed soprano Jenny Lind—"the Swedish Nightingale"—and is said to have written the soprano parts in *Elijah* with her in mind. She was as famous in her day as Renée Fleming is in ours. Alas, Lind did not sing *Elijah* until a year after Mendelssohn's death.

Interestingly, Lind created the Mendelssohn Scholarship Foundation in Felix's memory, to help budding British composers. The very first recipient was Arthur Sullivan—later Sir Arthur Sullivan—of Gilbert and Sullivan fame. With his scholarship money Sullivan was able to study at the Leipzig Conservatory, which had been founded by Mendelssohn, and where, incidentally, Sullivan was a classmate of the young Edvard Grieg.

Mendelssohn died at the age of 38 after a series of strokes. His sister Fanny had died earlier the same year of a stroke, an affliction that had also taken his parents and grandfather. Robert Schumann was among his pallbearers.

Mendelssohn's reputation as a composer has waxed and waned. He was enormously popular in his day. Later his music was thought to be found lacking when compared to such giants as Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. Frankly, by those standards, whose music is NOT found to be lacking?

I am not a musicologist and placing Mendelssohn in historical context is far beyond the scope of this little article. But I will conclude by saying I have always found much to admire in his compositions and hope to perform *Elijah* someday soon with *Coro Lux*.

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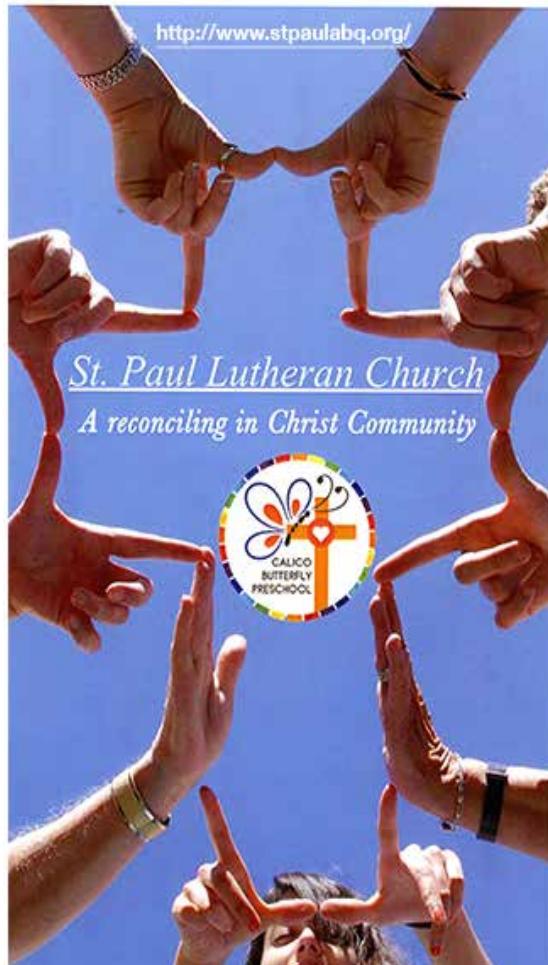


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Albuquerque Professional Property Management Bruni Karr Agency Mission Statement: The mission of BKA is to provide quality service to single-family property owners and residents in Albuquerque, New Mexico, demonstrating integrity and professionalism. Bruni Karr Agency, Karr Agency, is operating in Bernalillo County, New Mexico, specializing in full service, single-family residential property management. The company has been operating since 1979. The Bruni Karr Agency, a leader in the Albuquerque single-family residential property field, which manages approximately 400 single-family residential properties and is a member of the National Association of Residential Property Managers ® (NARPM)

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CORO LUX

Ashley Jonkman interviews *Coro Lux* alto and Board member, Linda Buffett

Ashley Jonkman

When Brad Ellingboe introduced me to Linda Buffett, he told me that she's one of the busiest octogenarians he knows—and he was absolutely right! Linda, a proud member of the alto section since the founding of *Coro Lux* 6 years ago, has also been on the Board of Directors for the same amount of time. When I asked her about her role on the Board, she laughingly described herself as the resident "curmudgeon" of the Board, the one who brings a steady dose of reality to the group. She has a keen eye and is always aware of the need for attention to detail. This was her last year on the Board, and while she will definitely miss the chance for input and contribution, she's happy to hand her Board baton onto new members!

Linda hails from the East Coast—she grew up in New Jersey and on Long Island, and while she's been a desert dweller since 1972, she says she'll always miss the coast. Growing up, she always spent the summer in the ocean. "I have salt water in my veins, I'll always miss the ocean," she remarked fondly. She lovingly refers to her family of origin as a "divided one," saying her mother couldn't sing at all, but that she and her brother loved to sing and make music with their father, who had a lovely voice. She joined her church choir in the third grade, and continued singing all the way through high school and into college as she studied geology at Smith College. It was there that she sang in chamber ensembles and concert choirs—singing 3 out of her 4 years of studying at Smith.

After college, she married (another geologist!) and began moving for his career. All in all, she's lived in 7 states, eventually settling here in New Mexico to be closer to her husband's family. Linda enjoyed her career as a homemaker, and happily remembers the times her daughter and friends would come to her home for lunch in the middle of their school day at Sandia High School. She continues to have close relationships with all 3 of her children (a daughter

(Continued on the following page)

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(Linda Buffet continued)

here in Albuquerque, a son in Colorado and another son in Seattle), 5 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

As for her personal interests and hobbies—Linda has many. In addition to her love of music and singing, she plays Bridge with a group of friends each week, spends many hours gardening, and has nurtured a fascination with genealogy—she enjoys learning about her family history and where she came from. She loves to travel and has been around the world a number of times. A favorite way of transportation? Jet trips that take travelers to several countries in a row. After spending a few days in each country, she hops back on a plane, ready to see the next place. She's been to Southeast Asia, Africa, Australia, Iceland, the Middle East, Europe and more. A bold and adventurous spirit, Linda travels by herself and makes friends with the other members of the travel groups she's a part of. And now that she's been vaccinated, she's hoping to head to Hawaii later this summer!

The most important thing in Linda's life is her relationships—both with her many friends and her family. After this past year of social distancing, like many of us, she's cautiously (and joyously!) beginning to re-establish old friendships that have been limited for safety reasons.



Linda Buffet

still thrilled by music. "I love the challenge of trying to produce the sound that Brad is trying to extract from us. He is a masterful teacher, and there is great satisfaction in working with someone so talented." A music lover through and through, she enjoys listening to anything classical, though her favorites are choral music and—fitting for her good-natured personality—her favorite composer is light-hearted and lively Mozart.

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<http://www.stpaulabq.org/>

Ashley Jonkman

St. Paul Lutheran Church
A reconciling in Christ Community

Great ways to financially support Coro Lux

If you are currently required to take minimum distributions from your IRA, you might consider a charitable contribution instead

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

Who qualifies?

- You must be 70 1/2 at the time of the distribution.
- You may distribute any amount up to \$100,000 per tax year.
- You and your spouse may make combined distributions up to \$200,000.
- 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?

- Yes, you can use up to the entire \$100,000 per person each year to satisfy any required minimum distributions you may have for the year, please consult your tax advisor for the detailed rules. The amount distributed as a charitable IRA distribution is included in the owner's required minimum distribution for the year, if any.

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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CORO LUX

News from other organizations



SANTA FE WOMEN'S ENSEMBLE

We have greatly missed seeing you and singing for you during this difficult time. Because the joy of music is such an essential part of

healing and keeping us grounded, we offer virtual concerts:

Our videos include beautiful music from past performances, new virtual collaborations and heart-warming reflections from Ensemble members.

Visit our website SFWE.org and click on the STILL SINGING link.

Please know how much we appreciate your continued support.
Thank you and stay well.



May videos by Santa Fe's **Sangre de Cristo Chorale** include a look back on this unusual season, which included virtual performances, virtual training and musical enrichment sessions for singers, outreach to local schools, and an exciting new commissioned piece. The Chorale closes out the season with a virtual performance of "America the Beautiful," which it will share in its June 2 email. Links to these videos and more are on the Chorale's website (<https://sdcchorale.org/>).



For the latest performance schedule go to:

<https://nmphil.org/>

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BRUNI-KARR
Rental & Management Agency

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