



CORO LUX



Chorus of Light



NEWS OF NOTE



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.





Kristen Norman

gives a preview of the articles you'll find in this issue

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LaVonne Yazzie

writes about *Coro Lux* combining forces with the new youth chorus to perform the Brubeck's *La Fiesta de La Posada*

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Announcing a new staff position

Coro Lux is seeking an experienced part-time executive assistant

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Bradley Ellingboe

announces the formation of a new *Coro Lux* youth chorus

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Ashley Jonkman

interviews Gabrielle Dietrich, a soprano also in charge of our new youth chorus

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Doing good as we do well

Giving the highest quality performances, we also give back to the community

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Bradley Ellingboe

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Performances by other local music organizations

links to their websites for information about concert schedules and other events

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Kristen Norman gives a forecast of the articles you'll find in the October issue

I am delighted to welcome you to the October issue of the *Coro Lux* newsletter. The fall season is typically one of enchanting colorful transition here in New Mexico. While we look forward to the brilliant color transformation in aspen and cottonwood leaves that soon fall, we also experience the uplifting rise of vividly colorful balloons across the crisp autumnal morning sky. Please take the opportunity to enjoy our selection of articles during this beautiful time.

The articles in this month's newsletter are a wonderful collection written in the varying colorful voices of our excellent contributing writers. Gabrielle Dietrich is the subject of our member interview. Written by Ashley Jonkman with brilliant and fresh insight, we learn about



Gabrielle Dietrich

Gabrielle, a soprano new to both *Coro Lux* as well as New Mexico. Our Artistic Director Brad Ellingboe has written a lively and exciting monthly update including information on *Coro Lux's* new youth chorus. Finally, we have the enthusiastic announcement of FebFest, the midwinter choral festival co-sponsored by *Coro Lux*.

I hope you enjoy the October edition of our newsletter. Whether you have forests of fall colors, hot air balloons, or another autumnal activity in your upcoming plans, know that *Coro Lux* is back in rehearsal and hard at work preparing some lovely repertoire for performance during the upcoming holiday season. See you soon!

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Coro Lux to combine forces with a new Youth Chorus to perform the Brubeck's La Fiesta de La Posada

By LaVonne Yazzie

Once the hot Albuquerque afternoons begin to turn into chilly evenings, my thoughts quickly turn to autumn and all the wonderful end-of-year activities that come with it if you live in central New Mexico: the State Fair, Balloon Fiesta, and Halloween, ultimately culminating in festive holiday preparations for Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, and Christmas before bringing in the 2021 New Year. Even the Delta Coronavirus cannot affect the seasonal changes or interrupt the passage of time as our corner of the world transitions into colder temperatures.

Some of my favorite memories from my youth and adulthood involve participation in Advent activities such as Las Posadas: lighting candles or *velas* as the congregation processes out of the church, greeting the mariachi as everyone sings *vamos todos a Belén, con amor y gozo* (translation: let's all go to Bethlehem with love and joy) while accompanying Mary (riding a real donkey!) and Joseph as they look for lodging before ultimately ending their journey at the manger.

This winter we are all in for a special holiday treat, as *Coro Lux* is in the process of doing something that they have never done before, taking on the exciting project of creating a children's choir for a collaborative performance of *La Fiesta de La Posada* by Dave and Iola Brubeck, scheduled to be performed on Saturday, December 4th at 6pm and on Sunday, December 5th at 3pm at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Though *Coro Lux's* performance of *La Fiesta de La Posada* will not have a real donkey, the deep roots of this processional celebration have flourished in New Mexico and is a deeply beloved tradition.

The youth chorus will be under the direction of Dr. Gabrielle Gabby² Dietrich, who shared some thoughts and ideas regarding this exciting venture (to learn more about Gabby and her professional background, see Ashley Jonkman's interview in this month's newsletter). For Gabby, it is only appropriate that she will be performing a piece by the Brubecks, sharing the fun fact that both she and David attended the same undergraduate school at the University of the

Continued on following page



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(Youth chorus continued)

Pacific. Gabby also had the great honor and privilege of working with Dave himself, stating that she has best memory ever of watching Dave wave everyone in onto the stage with a libation in hand.”

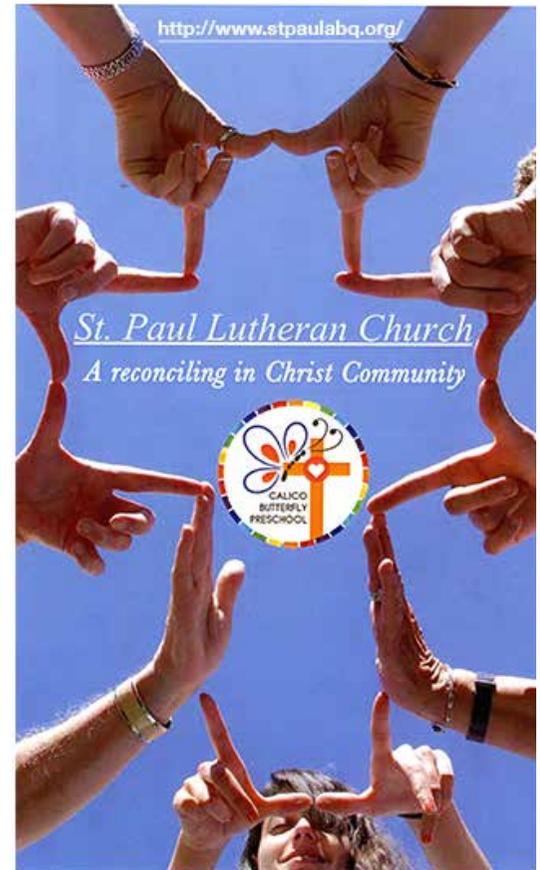
For youngsters considering joining the choir, Gabby clarifies that it is not a requirement for the singers to read music, but that the standard is to be able to read words.” After 20 years of working with young choral singers, Gabby is a self-proclaimed believer in literacy through experience,” and she states that it is often visually confusing for young people to try to make sense of dots, lines and squiggly marks. Gabby believes in making music first and then going back through the music,” first teaching children to sing and create music with feeling, before going back and showing them visually what they have learned in musical notation, which she finds empowers children to believe in their musical ability and to not be limited by written notation.

The youth chorus will ultimately be made up of 20 children, ranging in age from 12 through 15 years old, and it will be free for the children to participate, although they must commit to attending at least six of the eight regularly scheduled rehearsals. Most importantly, the children’s choir members must attend a final rehearsal with the full chorus on Tuesday November 30th, and both performances on December 4th and December 5th. The choir members are required to be fully vaccinated no later than two weeks prior to the first practice on October 7th, and the choir members must agree to follow all best-practice COVID safety protocols during rehearsals and performances.

According to Brad Ellingboe, the *Coro Lux* Artistic Director, the children’s choir will play a major role in this performance and will involve some light staging and movement throughout the piece.” In addition, there will be major voice roles for Mary (soprano) and the Three Wise Men (tenor, baritone, and bass). There will also be a band made up of two guitars, two trumpets, a string bass, a piano and a percussionist to play an instrumental postlude.

In closing, though the world faces a global pandemic now in its second year, *Coro Lux* continues to move forward by following best practices and COVID safety protocols to allow choral singing to occur after a year of total shutdown. The upcoming performance of *La Fiesta de La Posada* promises to be an unforgettable concert, honoring cultural and religious traditions with a mixed choral voice of multigenerational individuals singing for hope for a better future. If you wish to learn more information about the children’s choir or to sign up your child, please email Gabby at gdietch227@gmail.com.

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Executive assistant position announcement

By Bradley Ellingboe

Albuquerque's *Coro Lux* is seeking an experienced part-time executive assistant to work alongside a busy Artistic Director/Conductor and become an important part of our team. This person will be expected to perform a variety of tasks, help keep administrative projects on track, and handle more urgent requirements. An ideal candidate is responsive, thoughtful, self-directed, positive, and has experience working for non-profit arts organizations.

About us:

Albuquerque's *Coro Lux* ("the chorus of light") is a dynamic non-profit now in its 7th year. We have emerged from the pandemic in a strong position, both financially and artistically, and we are poised to continue growing. With a motto of "Doing good while we do well," *Coro Lux* is committed to choral excellence and to creating beautiful and meaningful concerts for our community, but also to philanthropic projects. *Coro Lux* is led by a volunteer Board of Directors, along with an Artistic Director/Conductor, and supported by a small staff, all committed to the values, mission, and people of the ensemble.

About the job:

Primary Responsibilities

- Carry out clerical & communication tasks as assigned by the Artistic Director/Conductor.
- Assist the Art Director with the production of printed materials.
- Work closely with the Board of Directors to help them succeed in their appointed responsibilities.

Secondary Responsibilities

- Maintain & update *Coro Lux* web site (hosted by WordPress)
- Create social media posts and other content (for our Facebook and Instagram accounts)
- Research and apply for grants

(Continued on following page)



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(Assistant candidate continued)

About you:

The ideal candidate will have at least 3 years of experience working for a non-profit arts organization, and will have a musical background. Required knowledge, skills, and abilities include:

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Excellent organizational skills
- Experience with maintaining web sites
- Experience using and creating and posting content for social media outlets (Facebook, Instagram)
- Excellent listening skills and the ability to anticipate needs in a choral context
- Ability to work independently, self motivate, and multi-task
- Excellent time management skills

An ideal candidate is responsive, thoughtful, self-directed, positive, and has experience working for non-profit arts organizations.

Starting date:

- September 10, 2021, or when the position is filled.

Salary:

- \$25/hour, with a maximum of 40 hours/month (ca. 10 hours/week)
- This position is for a self-employed, independent contractor

To apply send a resume and letter of application to ellingboe@abqcorolux.org
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CORO LUX

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.

Go here to donate:

<https://abqcorolux.org/donations/>

CORO LUX

We're on YouTube!



Check us out.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7MYTsW_bnjJun31GBHjwIQ



The birth of the *Coro Lux* Youth Chorus

By Bradley Ellingboe

As you've seen before in my communications, and others from *Coro Lux*, we have an unofficial motto "to do good while we do well." This has manifested itself in many of our concerts, benefitting local charities (e.g., Paws and Stripes, Roadrunner Food Bank, NM Chapter of the Federation of the Blind), or helping to sensitize our audiences to some of the social issues we face today (for example, our presentations of "Considering Matthew Shepard" or our annual winter festival dealing with the history and traditions of African American music). An exciting development along these lines is our plan to form a youth chorus this month under the *Coro Lux* banner.

The original impetus for this new chorus was the immediate need we face for our December concerts of Brubeck's *La Fiesta de la Posada*. The piece is a jazzy rendering of an archetypal New Mexican tradition. It tells the story of Mary and Joseph looking for a place to stay before Mary has her baby. As such, the chorus represents the townspeople of a little Spanish-speaking village and, of course, in this town there are also children and youth! Hence, the need for such a chorus for our December programs.

However, as we began to study the problem, we also saw that there's a dearth of musical opportunities for our young people. I can't speak for everyone's background, but when my wife and I were growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, school music was every bit as much a part of a normal school's curriculum as math, science and social studies. Sadly, that is often no longer the case. Although I have rarely (if ever!) met someone who had no interest in music whatsoever, nevertheless, we seem to treat giving our youngsters any background in the subject as a "frill" we cannot afford to provide. To me this line of reasoning is akin to saying, "Yes, we understand you like stories, but being able to actually read them from a book is only

(Continued on the following page)



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(The birth of the children's chorus continued)

for rich people." Absurd! But, in fact, that's more or less the state of things these days.

Happily, *Coro Lux* has the ability to step into this void. There are several circumstances that combine to make it possible for us to offer this opportunity.

First off, thanks to our Board, as well as many of you reading this article, we were able to survive the pandemic in pretty good financial shape. Secondly, we have a membership willing to take this on, including many people who themselves developed their lifelong love of music via school music programs. Thirdly, also within our membership we have a wealth of professional talent. In fact, fully 35% of our current membership consists of active or retired music teachers.

One such music professional is a relatively new member of our group you'll read about elsewhere in this issue. Dr. Gabrielle "Gabby" Dietrich moved to New Mexico within the last year and we were fortunate enough to attract her into our ensemble. Gabby holds three degrees in music, including her Doctorate in Choral Conducting, and also did a full year of study at the Kodaly Institute in Hungary. For someone whose main interest is in the teaching of singing to young people, that's the equivalent of an engineer studying at MIT or a lawyer attending Harvard Law.

We've asked Gabby to head up this new chorus, which is something she had been doing in her former position at Penn State in Erie, Pennsylvania. If you have a young person who may be interested in knowing more about this, or joining, please look for further details on our website homepage: www.abqcorolux.org

It's also our hope this chorus will continue into the future. That is, after our immediate need for a group to sing in our December concerts, the interest will be strong enough for us to continue to offer this chorus in the future. Obviously, we are still somewhat at the mercy of the Coronavirus, and I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say I hope the winter of 2021 is healthier for us all than last year's. Time will tell.

But in the meantime, we're making plans for a future of growth and of providing more opportunities for more people in our community, regardless of background or income. We're going to continue to try to do good while we do well. [Return to contents page](#)

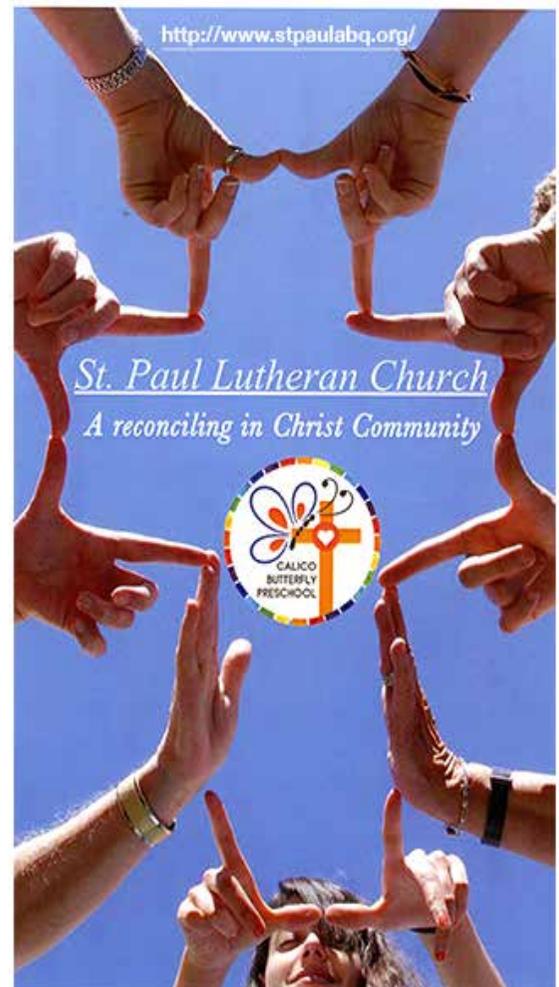


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Ashley Jonkman



Ashley Jonkman interviews Gabrielle Dietrich, a soprano and in charge of our new Youth Chorus

For Gabrielle “Gabby” Dietrich, coming to New Mexico has been a joyous new adventure. After spending many years in a small city in Pennsylvania, (Erie, to be exact) Gabby and her fiancé, Mike Morrison, packed their things and moved to Albuquerque, to be closer to Mike’s parents. They made the decision to move on July 31st, 2020, and were already driving the moving truck across the country by August 13th! As they said goodbye to their respective campuses (Gabby was working as a teaching professor of music, Mike as an economics professor), they looked forward to discovering the unique culture New Mexico has to offer.

Gabby grew up in Portland, Oregon, in a not-so-musical family. Her musical gifts come from her paternal grandmother, who was an accomplished coloratura soprano. It was from her that Gabby inherited her voice and her love of music. Gabby first learned how to read music when she began taking piano lessons at age 12. She was homeschooled from kindergarten through 12th grade, and was part of a chorus of homeschooled girls. A natural leader, Gabby was frustrated that some in her section weren’t learning their notes, so she declared herself the soprano section leader and asked them all to come to rehearsal early to refine their parts. To her delight and surprise, they all came (and they learned their notes!).

Her passion for music and for excellence was kindled early on, and from that point Gabby knew she wanted to study music seriously. After high school, Gabby went to the University of the Pacific, where she earned her undergraduate degree in Music Education. Following undergrad, she headed to Colorado where she received her Master’s in Choral Conducting at CU Boulder. This was followed by study at the Kodály Institute in Kecskemét, Hungary, after which Gabby returned to Boulder where she earned her Doctorate in Choral Conducting.

While in Hungary Gabby became familiar with the core of what Kodály had to offer. She says, “The methodology is cool, but what I really love about what Kodály said is not so much the nuts and bolts—that’s not really at the core of what he was after. His main point was that only the best is good enough for children. The person in the country music school

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(Gabrielle Dietrich continued)

has the power to either create a community that loves music, or a bunch of people who hate music because the teacher makes it torture.” Gabby herself is on a similar mission—to help young people love music.

She left behind a wonderful group called the “Young People’s Chorus of Erie,” in which her choristers rehearsed 2 hours a day, 4 days a week. Describing the group as the best part of her job at Penn State, Gabby remembers them fondly as the “light of my life; I loved their flexibility, their willingness to learn and change and grow, and just how exciting it was for them to learn something new.” She will be preparing the children’s chorus for the winter performances of the Brubeck piece with *Coro Lux*, and has high hopes that, as vaccines are approved for younger people, a more permanent children’s choir would be established. “I’m ready for a situation where I can be more collaborative; where I’m working with youth, where everybody wants to be there.”

Gabby is currently working as a choral scholar and summer music coordinator at the United Church of Santa Fe, where she sings under Brad Ellingboe’s direction. Of the people she’s met while singing in Santa Fe, she says, “It’s made me think so well, both of the group, and of Brad, and of New Mexico in general. It’s not a place that’s stuck in the



Gabrielle Dietrich

mud—they know how to welcome people!” A devoted dog parent, Gabby enjoys spending time with her fiancé and their three fur babies—Tucker, Gordon and Guido, as well as cooking, reading, and cultivating plants in the yard of their new home here in New Mexico. Though she loves classical music, like many professional musicians, her brain is a bit too an-

alytical to listen to it for pleasure. Instead she prefers a wide variety of pop music and folk rock such as the Avett Brothers, Carole King, James Taylor, and more.

As for her upcoming season with *Coro Lux*, Gabrielle says she’s truly looking forward to it and is “excited to sing in a group again—even though we will be in pandemic mode, it’s magical to me to be able to sit in a chair and do the thing that I really love!” She describes the ensemble as “such a nice group of humans, then Brad—it’s not every conductor who sees other people’s strengths as his own strengths, the willingness to do that is huge, and it really draws people in.”

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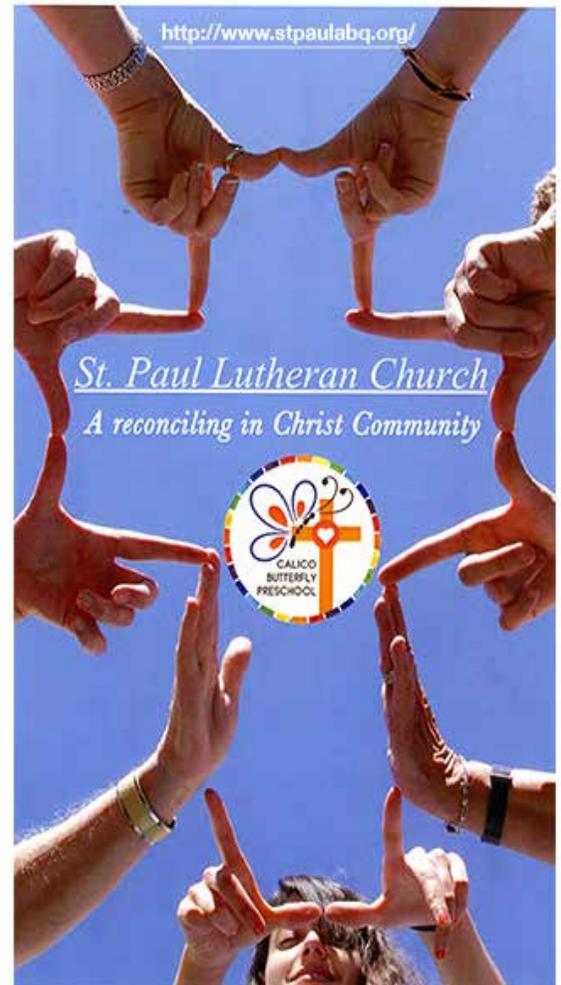
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“FebFest” is coming featuring special guest Rosephanye Powell

By Bradley Ellingboe

For the past several years *Coro Lux* has joined together with the United Church of Santa Fe to offer a midwinter choral festival. In the past these have taken place over the Martin Luther King, Jr., weekend and been called “JanFest.” The two-day event included workshops on choral technique, lectures on relevant topics, and rehearsals of repertoire, and it all culminated in a concert whose free-will offering went to benefit one charity in Santa Fe and one in Albuquerque each year. As these workshops evolved, they took on more and more the character of emphasizing the music of African Americans (particularly Spirituals and Gospel music) and the intertwined topics of racism and social justice.

We plan to continue these offerings in 2022 but, for a variety of reasons, have moved the festival to February 19th and 20th and therefore renamed it “FebFest.” February is Black History Month, so it is an equally fitting time for our annual festivals. Moreover, having a whole month of weekends (instead of just the MLK weekend in January) allows us more flexibility in scheduling our special guests.

This year I’m delighted to say our special guest is Rosephanye Powell. I cannot say enough good things about her! Dr. Powell is nationally and internationally recognized as a composer, conductor, vocal soloist and educator. Her works are sung by the top professional and university choruses in the country. As a conductor she has led festivals around the globe. As a professional singer, she is an expert in the Spiritual tradition. And as an educator she is Professor of Voice at Auburn University. For more information about Dr. Powell, go to her website: <http://rosephanyepowell.com>

FebFest will take place in Santa Fe at the United Church (1804 Arroyo Chamiso) on February 19 & 20, 2022. The price of the festival will be \$65, which includes sheet music and lunch on Saturday. Space is limited to 90 participants and is on a first-come/first-served basis. For more information, or to register, go to abqcorolux.org.

We hope to see you there!

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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.**

Go here to donate:

<https://abqcorolux.org/donations/>



We’re on YouTube!



Check us out.

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



Links to other organizations websites



SANTA FE WOMEN'S ENSEMBLE

Visit our website <https://sfwe.org> and click on the STILL SINGING link. Please know how much we appreciate your continued support. Thank you and stay well.



Links to videos and more are on the Chorale's website (<https://sdchorale.org/>).



For the latest performance schedule go to: <https://nmphil.org/>



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