

Platteville Children's Choirs **2025-2026** Family Guide



Our Mission:

“Developing the whole child
through the choral music process.”

Contact us:

Email <pcchoir1@gmail.com>

www.facebook.com/PlattevilleChildrensChoirs

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Meet Our Staff



Music Explorers Director Kelsey Duss

Kelsey Duss has been teaching general and vocal music since 2010. She taught general music and choir in the Shullsburg School District for five years and has been teaching at Westview Elementary in Platteville since January 2016. Kelsey teaches first through fourth grade general music at Westview. She is a 2010 graduate of Clarke University with a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education and a 2015 graduate of University of Wisconsin- La Crosse with a Master's Degree in Education. She lives in Platteville with her husband Brian and their two daughters, Scarlett and Eliza.

Music Explorers Intern: To be announced



Apprentice Singers Director Juli Clayton

Juli Clayton is the High School Band and Choir Instructor at Cuba City. She directs the Concert Band, Jazz Ensemble, Concert Choir, and Vocal Jazz. Ms. Clayton has a Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. In addition to her duties at Cuba City High School, she is also a member of the Dubuque Chorale, the National Association for Music Education, and the Wisconsin Music Educators Association.

Her favorite pastimes include traveling, reading, watching the Packers and going to movies. She is an avid fan of Doctor Who and has been known to color from time to time. Her current favorite band is Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros.

She is originally from Boscobel, Wisconsin and grew up on a dairy farm near Gays Mills, Wisconsin. She and her husband, Cody, live in Benton with their dog, Bolero.

Apprentice Singers Interns: To be announced

Apprentice Singers Accompanist: Rebecca Swenson



Choristers Director: Tamra Bickel

Tamra Bickel teaches general music in the Dodgeville Public Schools.

Choristers Intern: To be announced

Choristers Accompanist: Deborah Custer



Cantabile Fall Director David Murphy

David Murphy teaches vocal music at Lancaster Middle & High School, and he leads choirs at two churches in Lancaster. He holds a Masters degree in Education from UW-Platteville and a Bachelors of Music from UW-Madison. Mr. Murphy is a member of ACDA, NAfME, and the VoiceCare Network. This fall, he begins his 32nd year as a teacher. He is excited to work with PCC and Cantabile another season.

His wife, Patricia Leh-Murphy, is an accompanist for various churches and the Platteville Children's Choir. The Murphy kids are students, musicians, and athletes; they have all participated in the Platteville Children's Choir. Mr. Murphy has been part of the Platteville Children's Choir program since 2016.



Cantabile Spring Director Ashley Calderon-McHugh

Ashley Calderon-McHugh is the Choral and Musical Theatre Director, and Vocal Lesson and General Music Teacher for Mineral Point Unified Schools. She is a Music Theory Adjunct Instructor for UW-Oshkosh, Certified Adjudicator and State Honors Project Coach for WSMA, Board Member for Mineral Point Opera House, Vocal Faculty for Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, and private voice lesson teacher. Calderon-McHugh was an Adjunct Instructor at New York University Steinhardt while earning a Masters in Classical Voice and an Advanced Certificate in Vocal Pedagogy. She also earned a Masters in Vocal Performance and a Bachelors in Music Education from Eastern Illinois University. Calderon-McHugh is a 2023 recipient of the Herb Kohl Education Teacher Fellowship. She has performed most recently with Fresco Opera, Characters 2 Life, Pop Factory Players, and the Madison Symphony Orchestra Chorus.

Cantabile Accompanist: Patricia Leh-Murphy

Cantabile Intern: [To be announced](#)

Marcia Russell, PCC Executive Director <pcchoir1@gmail.com>



Marcia Russell teaches students in general music and choir at Platteville Middle School. She has a Masters of Music in Music Education from Kent State University, and a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance and General/Choral Music Education from Lawrence University. Ms. Russell is an active member of ACDA

and NafME, and serves as the past-chair of the Wisconsin Music Educators Association's Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance project (CMP). She has been a conductor with the Platteville Children's Choir for almost 30 years and is a conductor with the Madison Youth Choirs.

PCC Office Volunteer: Amelia Armstrong

Website Volunteer: Belinda Lyght

PLATTEVILLE CHILDREN'S CHOIR Calendar 2025-2026

- All Choirs will rehearse at First English Lutheran Church on Monday evenings from 6:30-7:30 PM (215 W. Pine St. Platteville) September through April.
- **Music Explorers** (K-2nd) will meet in the Love Room on the lower level. Please drop off at Chestnut St Lot on South side of the church
- **Apprentice Singers** (2nd-3rd) will be in the lower level Fellowship Hall. Please drop off at Chestnut Street Lot on the South side of the church
- **Choristers** (4th-5th) will be in the main level meeting space. Please drop off at Clare Bank and Pine Street, on the North side of the building.
- **Cantabile** (6th-8th) will be in the main floor Sanctuary. Please drop off at Clare Bank and Pine Street, on the North side of the building.
- If you have singers in multiple choirs, please drop off at Clare Bank and Pine Street, on the North side of the building.
- ***Children are expected to be picked up NO LATER THAN 7:40 p.m. at their rehearsal location. Children who are to walk home after rehearsals will need a signed and dated note from a parent/guardian.

Fall Auditions: Mon., August 25, 2025 Time 5:30-7:30 Sign Up Here

September 15: Season Begins: Meeting and Rehearsal at FELC for all three ensembles/ME

September 22: Rehearsal

September 29: Rehearsal (Family Promise: alternate locations)

October 6: Rehearsal Ice Cream Night Parent Volunteers [Sign Up Genius](#)

October 13: Rehearsal

October 20: Rehearsal

October 27: Rehearsal

November 3: Rehearsal Uniform Evaluation Night: Come in concert uniform!

November 10: Rehearsal

November 17: Rehearsal Combined rehearsal with Platteville Chorale, **Location CFA!**

November 23rd Fall Concert 2:00 p.m. at UWP CFA 12:45 p.m. call

November 24: Rehearsal (Family Promise: alternate locations at FELC)

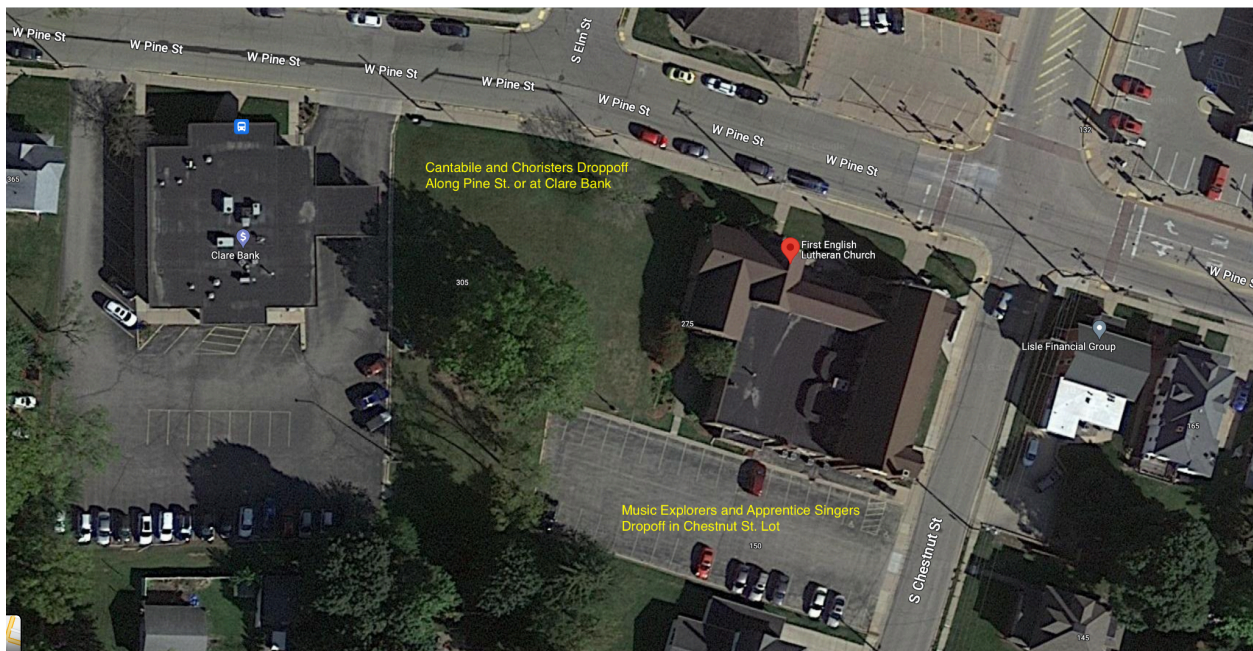
December 1: Rehearsal Last rehearsal for Music Explorers!

December 5: Holiday Gala at UWP (AS, CH and CB: call time 7:10 PM)

December 8: Holiday Concert 7:00 p.m. Location Platteville High School 6:45 call

January 26: Rehearsal All choirs resume
 February 2: Rehearsal
 February 9: Rehearsal Invite a Friend to Choir Permission Form Linked here
February 16: Rehearsal BRING A FRIEND TO CHOIR NIGHT!
 February 23: Rehearsal
 March 2: Rehearsal
 March 9: Rehearsal
 March 16: NO Rehearsal Platteville SPRING BREAK
 March 23: Rehearsal
 March 30: Rehearsal
 April 6: Rehearsal Open Rehearsal, Tour information Purchase Culver's Cards
April 11: Cantabile Day Trip
 April 13: Final Rehearsal Last day of Music Explorers
April 15 School Tour, All Day, 8:00 a.m.
April 19: Spring Concert 2:00 p.m. Platteville High School Auditorium call 1:15 PM
 April 20: Placement hearings for ME, Apprentice and some Choristers FELC 4:00-7:00 PM

Parking/Dropoff Map



Drop off and Pick Up Locations:

Cantabile and Choristers: Along Pine Street or at Clare Bank Parking Lot, enter main level doors.

Apprentice Singers and Music Explorers: In the Chestnut Street Lot, enter lower level doors.

If you have singers in multiple choirs, please drop off at Clare Bank and Pine Street, on the North side of the building.

Location Changes: Occasionally, locations are changed due to conflicts at the church. Please read your email or the communication channel in Remind.

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS:

(Check www.FACEBOOK.com/PlattevilleChildrensChoirs after 4pm on Mondays)

Since many members of our choirs travel some distance to participate, PCC is sensitive to weather-related travel safety, and we usually cancel rehearsals/concerts if travel is questionable. You should ALWAYS check the Facebook page or the Website after 4:00pm to verify that rehearsal has been canceled before traveling. Weather-related cancellations will not count toward your absence quota. If you decide that travel is not acceptable for you but the PCC event is being held, this will count toward your semester absence quota unless otherwise announced. **For the 25-26 Season we are trying communication through the Remind App too!**

PCC Season Overview

***Participation in all rehearsals and concerts and tours is required.**

PCC's three performing choirs (Apprentice Singers, Choristers and Cantabile) rehearse approximately 25 Mondays during the year, and the Music Explorers meet for approximately 25 Mondays in the Fall and Spring.

Music Explorers: Both Semesters, kindergarten, 1st & 2nd graders.

Apprentice Singers: Both Semesters, second and third graders selected by hearing.

Choristers: Both Semesters, fourth and fifth graders selected by hearing.

Cantabile: Both Semesters, sixth, seventh, eighth graders selected by hearing.

PCC normally presents five major concerts & tours during the season.

Fall Concert

University Holiday Gala Concert

Platteville Holiday Concert and Sing-along

Southwest Wisconsin School-Day Tour Concert

Spring Concert

Cantabile Weekend Tour, Every spring

Additional "optional" concerts may occasionally be scheduled.

FEES, SCHOLARSHIPS, FUNDRAISING

TUITION FEES FOR THE 2025-2026 SEASON

Tuition Fees are \$225/year for all choirs and Music Explorers.

Families with multiple students: \$225/year for the first student, \$205/year for the second student, \$195/year for the third student.

PAYMENT DUE DATE and COMMITMENT FORM

[PCC Season Commitment Form](#) due August 11, 2025

Tuition is due in full by September 1st.

Please mail payment to: Platteville Chorale, PO Box 344, Platteville, WI 53818

*Your kind donation of one stamp helps keep our non-profit organization alive. Thank you!

PAYMENT POLICY

- PCC accepts personal & cashier checks, money orders, or cash for tuition payment. Electronic Funds Transfer is not available at this time.
- Payment arrangements different from the above plan must be confirmed by contacting the PCC Administrator.
- If no payment or payment arrangements have been made by September 11th, the PCC member may be removed from the roster and their position assigned to another singer.

REFUND POLICY

- Before Monday, September 15th, 2025: Refund of total tuition paid minus a \$50 fee.
- After Tuesday, September 16th, 2025: No refund.
- If a singer is dropped at any time from the program due to attendance or conduct policy violation, no refund will be given.

OTHER FEES AND EXPENSES

- Concert Admission: Suggested Family Donation per concert is \$20
- Apprentice Singers/Choristers/Cantabile Lands End polo shirt: Approximately \$30
- PCC School Tour: approx. \$10 for lunch at Culvers
- Cantabile Weekend Tour: Approximately \$175 per singer

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Platteville Chorale Board of Directors is dedicated to ensuring that PCC is affordable for every member. If there is a financial need, please contact the PCC Administrator regarding extended payment arrangements. Requests are confidential.

FUNDRAISING

There are **NO** fundraising activities required or requested from singers in the program. Each year, tuition covers less than 60% of the cost of PCC programs. Concert ticket sales, donations, and community grants and support funds from the Platteville Chorale, Inc. make up the balance of the program costs. Since Platteville Children's Choir is an operation of the Platteville Chorale, Inc., you will be offered an opportunity to make a tax deductible donation to the Chorale in the fall. When additional Cantabile tour costs are required, an opportunity may be offered to its members for individual fundraising activities.

PCC MATERIALS AND UNIFORM:

Provided:

- T-Shirt (included in tuition; worn at all rehearsals and required on School Tour in April)
- PCC music bag and all music: \$15 fee for loss or damage

You will need to provide:

- Apprentice Singers, Choristers and Cantabile: light blue Lands' End mesh short sleeved polo shirt with PCC logo, your own black bottoms, any brand (black full length pants, black skirt to at least to knees, with black hosiery) or black shoes,

- black socks.
- Apprentice Singers, Choristers and Cantabile: Nice-looking blue jeans (no holes!) for School Tour in April
- The Lands End polo shirt costs approximately \$30 new, and is available through www.landsend.com/myschool. Create an account or sign into your existing account. Search for your school by name or search by using your Preferred School Number: Our School uniform code is 900129560. Use the True Fit® tool to find the right size. Place your order by **September 15, 2025** to ensure delivery before our first performance.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

PCC singers are required to attend all rehearsals, performances, and tours scheduled for their choir. Each singer holds a valuable place in the choir. Absences affect not only the individual singer's progress, but also that of the entire ensemble. PCC's attendance policy exists to ensure a safe and positive experience for all members. It is expected that all dates for rehearsals, performances, and tours will be placed on your yearly calendar as a priority commitment.

Why is attendance important?

In order to maintain standards of musical excellence, PCC requires a commitment to consistent and punctual attendance of rehearsals, performances, and special events by all of its members. Since the choir is a team with equal, balanced sections, absences and tardiness disrupt the progress and quality of rehearsal and performances.

How are absences handled?

Excused absences exceeding two (2) rehearsals per semester will be probable cause for dismissing the member from singing in the corresponding concert. The member will still be expected to attend all remaining rehearsals. Failure to do so will be probable cause for dismissal from the PCC program. Unexcused absences from a concert or tour will result in dismissal of the member from the program. Tardiness or leaving early will be noted, with every three (3) occurrences counted as a single absence.

How should I report an absence?

- All planned absences must be reported by 5 PM on Monday evenings using the digital
- Last minute absences due to illness or emergency should also use the [Absence Form 2025-2026](#) as soon as possible prior to the start of Monday rehearsals.
- To ensure your singer's safety, if they are absent from rehearsal and a form was not submitted, the choir intern will call the parent/guardian during rehearsal time.

What about Concert and Tour attendance?

Attendance is required at all PCC concerts and tours in which your choir is performing. A reason for absence from a concert must be given to the Administrative Assistant and your director as far in advance as possible. Failure to do so will be probable cause for dismissal from PCC. Following that notification, issues related to absences and participation determinations will be handled by the Platteville Children's Choir Administrative Committee composed of Directors and Administrative personnel. Sports practices and

games are not considered reasonable excuses to miss a concert or tour.

Who keeps track of absences?

The PCC staff carefully tracks absences from rehearsals to ensure everyone's safety and to ensure that PCC's absence policies are consistently and fairly enforced. It is the member's responsibility to check in with the attendance taker at the beginning of EVERY rehearsal. If the member must leave early or arrive late, it is his or her responsibility to let the director know in advance.

Concert Details 2025-2026

Fall Concert (\$) Suggested donation \$20 per family

Sunday, November 23, 2025

Brodbeck Concert Hall, UW-Platteville Center for the Arts

1:00pm; All singers report in uniforms

2:00pm; Concert with Platteville Chorale

University Holiday Gala Concert (\$) Apprentice Singers, Choristers and Cantabile

Friday, December 5, 2025

Center for the Arts/UWP, Advance Ticketing (608) 342-1298

7:00pm; Singers report in concert uniforms

7:30pm; Performance

Platteville Area Holiday Concert (free) Required for Apprentice Singers, Choristers & Cantabile; Music Explorers and families welcome

Monday, December 8, 2025

Location PHS

6:45pm; ALL singers report in concert uniforms with holiday accessories

7:00pm; ALL Choirs Concert

Spring School Day Tour (Apprentice Singers, Choristers and Cantabile)

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

8:00am; All singers report to FELC in PCC t-shirts and blue jeans

(NO HOLES in School Day Tour clothing, please!!!)

3:00pm; Return location to be determined

Please report your singer's absence to his/her school.

Drop-off and pick-up locations are to be determined.

Spring Concert (\$) Suggested donation \$20 per family

Sunday, April 19, 2026

Platteville High School, General Seating (No Advance Ticketing)

1:15pm; All singers report in uniforms

2:00pm; Concert and Closing Ceremony

PCC CODE OF CONDUCT

As a member of the Platteville Children's Choir, members are "ambassadors" for the entire organization and behavior reflects upon the entire group. Members are expected to use good manners, display common courtesy, show consideration for others, and respect the staff and facilities. Members understand that a successful PCC experience requires a cohesive group

wherein each individual accepts and follows the same standards of behavior. PCC is dedicated to educating a diverse population of young singers. PCC affirms its commitment to a community in which all students and staff are accepted as individuals.

1. Members will respect the guidance and authority of the PCC staff at all times
2. It is a privilege for PCC to use the facilities at the First English Lutheran Church. Members will respect these facilities as guests.
3. Members will be required to act appropriately during rehearsals. Although the directors acknowledge the appropriate energy and enthusiasm children are known for, if a member disrupts the musical process with inappropriate behavior, the directors will act to modify that behavior with verbal warnings, time away from the ensemble and/or removal for the rehearsal followed by parent conference prior to readmission to rehearsal. Two such instances may result in permanent dismissal from the choir.
4. Members are expected to arrive at choir events on time, having used the restroom just prior to rehearsal. Members should bring a water bottle and a pencil to rehearsal.
5. Cell phones and other electronic equipment must be turned off during rehearsals. No texting is allowed.

HEARINGS AND PROMOTIONS

MUSIC EXPLORERS

Children do not need to audition to participate in the Music Explorers. This choir helps children develop basic musical skills through singing, dancing, playing instruments, and improvising music. They are filled on a pre-paid basis. Currently, this program is open to 20 members. At the end of the program, singers entering 2nd grade will be offered the opportunity to advance into Apprentice Singers via hearing. Acceptance is dependent upon vocal and maturity levels. Reading skills and pitch matching skills are crucial for advancement into Apprentice Singers.

HEARINGS

All singers in the Platteville Children's Choir, except the Music Explorers, are admitted by hearing. Singers entering grades 2 through 8 may register for hearings. Those who are members of the choir may remain in the program until they complete grade 8 without a re-hearing. Hearings are held in spring each year. Those accepted into the Choir must sign a contract with the choir stating their understanding and agreement with the expectations of the choir. PCC is a choral music education organization; children are taught how to sing as a choral ensemble, not as soloists. Potential singers are often recommended by their school music teacher.

The directors who host hearings are music educators who know and love children, are kind and gentle, and will be very supportive. A parent or guardian may accompany the singer for the hearing at the discretion of the singer, but siblings and friends are not allowed in the room. At the hearing, the directors will have the child sing some familiar songs with and without piano accompaniment and will check the singer's voice range. The total hearing is about 10 minutes long. No preparation for the hearing is required. However, it is useful

for the singer to practice singing with someone, become comfortable singing by themselves, and practice singing their own part in a round like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." The directors will rate the singer's ability to match pitch, remember rhythms, read with fluency, follow instructions, and read music. They will also observe the singer's breath support, posture, vocal technique, and tonal memory. This does not mean the singer must be greatly advanced in any of these areas, but it does help the teacher know in which areas learning is required and helps with proper choir placement.

The most important qualities children need to participate in PCC are an ability to match pitch, a clear and pleasant singing voice, ability to read, and a love of singing! Parents/guardians of singers will receive a written notice or an email giving the hearing results and possible choir placement for your child.

PROMOTIONS

The Platteville Children's Choir program consists of up to 130 children in three groups. Each choir differs in the singers' ability and experience, generally based on age and grade level. Progression from choir to choir is based mainly on vocal skill level. Commitment, behavior, and musical knowledge are also considered.

The Music Explorers will schedule group vocal hearings for all singers at the conclusion of the season. Advancement to the performing choirs will be determined based upon this hearing and observations throughout the season.

The Apprentice Singers and Choristers Directors will schedule individual vocal hearings for recommended singers at the conclusion of the season. Advancement to the next ensemble will be determined based upon this hearing and observations throughout the season.

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

As a PCC member, you are strongly encouraged to participate in your school choir/music program. School music programs provide regular singing technique, musicianship building, experience singing additional literature, the chance to learn from different music directors, additional singing opportunities (all-state groups, solo/ensemble festivals, tours, competitions, and musicals), opportunities for leadership, and the opportunity to serve as role models. Involvement in your school choir and the training and experience you gain there, along with the support you receive from your music director, will make you a stronger member of PCC. In turn, your school music program will benefit from the technical, musical, and leadership skills you develop as a PCC member. Our area music educators are an important part of the support network for PCC. We also encourage community music event participation.

ABOUT PCC

The Platteville Chorale is a community chorus initiated in 1975 by Dr. Gerald Darrow, the Director of Choral Activities in the Music Department at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville at that time. He, together with his wife Sarah and the officers of the Chorale, envisioned the need and the opportunity to begin something important for the Platteville community as well as all of southwestern Wisconsin. The Platteville Children's Choir (PCC) was established in 1989 by the Platteville Chorale and is governed by the bylaws of that organization. The initial children's choir was composed of about sixty 4th, 5th, & 6th grade students from the area. With the guidance of Dr. Christina Shields, PCC was expanded in the fall of 1998 to three choirs: the Training Choir, the Treble Choir and the Youth Ensemble. Currently these three auditioned choirs are called the

Apprentice Singers (primarily 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade children), Choristers (primarily for 4th, 5th and 6th grade singers) and Cantabile (primarily for 6th, 7th and 8th grade singers.) With the expansion came the motto "Developing the whole child through the choral music process".

For a number of years the annual calendar has included: auditions in May and/or August, a fall concert together with the Adult Chorale, UW Platteville's Holiday Gala in early December, informal holiday concerts in mid-December, a school-day tour of area schools with 30-minute concerts in late April, and a final spring concert in late April. Every other year, Cantabile makes a weekend tour. In the past, the tour has taken singers to the Twin Cities area, Milwaukee, and Madison. The next Cantabile Tour will take place in the Spring of 2022.

In January of 2007, our training choir, Music Explorers (ME), was initiated. ME is designed to give children a foundation for choral music with an emphasis on the development of musical skills. ME is open to 1st- and 2nd- graders and occasionally kindergarten-aged children without audition.

Dwight Klaassen, past president of the Chorale since 1994, gave vision to the Children's Choir program and volunteered his administrative guidance. More recent administrators have included Margaret Ruf and Luanne Rogers. Through the years, the organization has continued to grow. It has been blessed with excellent leaders who are outstanding musicians, educators, and personnel.

Over 1000 young singers throughout southwestern Wisconsin have been impacted by the Platteville Children's Choir. Numerous alumni of PCC have gone on to pursue careers in choral or instrumental music including public and private music educators, professors of music performance and education, opera singers, and regional and Broadway musical theatre performers. PCC is proud to have consistently measured up to its mission:

"Developing the whole child through the choral music process."