



**SINGER SUPPORT  
HANDBOOK**

**2025-2026 SEASON**

Welcome to the Stockton Chorale!

The mission of the Stockton Chorale is to *inspire joy and enrich our community through choral music*. We are so pleased and honored that you have chosen to join our Chorale family and share in the joy of singing and creating rich, meaningful music together. In our commitment to supporting all members in the organization, we have created this Singer Support Handbook to provide helpful information about the Stockton Chorale and expectations for members of all our ensembles.

Singing in a choral ensemble is a collaborative effort that includes every singer, our conductors and accompanists working together towards one, unified outcome: To create beautiful music that inspires and enriches lives. We hope our Singer Support Handbook will help you become familiar with the operations and protocols our organization strives to implement to serve our members and our community effectively. Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to review the content.

Questions or concerns regarding membership, singer support, and this handbook may be sent to your section leader. Likewise, if there has been a life event in any current or former singers, please be sure to share it with your section leader so that our organization can support appropriately.

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## **The Organization**

The Stockton Chorale is an independent, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The success of the Chorale is founded on the dedication, volunteerism and financial support of our singers, community sponsors and donors. We are governed by a Board of Directors that is composed of community leaders and singers. Board members serve a two-year term and are responsible for the governance of policies, the fiscal health of the organization, strengthening community partnerships, and fundraising efforts. Singers on the Board of Directors lead in areas that support the singers, ensembles and in the day-to-day business of the organization.

Board Members for the 2025-2026 Season:

President: Erin Parra

Vice President:

Secretary: Mouchumi Bhattacharyya

Treasurer: Jennifer Alcover

Bruce Adams (Organizational Development)

Mouchumi Bhattacharyya (Fundraising)

Mark Calónico (Organizational Development, Financial)

Larry Graser (Governance, Financial)

Yvette Quintana (Communications)

Beatriz Sanchez (Communications)

Elke Schmeling (Fundraising)

Kimberly Soares (Community Outreach)

Daniel Wright (Governance)

Nate Widelitz, Artistic Director

## **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

- To inspire joy and enrich our community through choral music.

## OUR CORE VALUES

- We believe choral singing joins people in musical and social harmony and thereby elevates our members and audiences, spiritually and ethically.
- We strive to bring the diverse community together, by promoting a mental state of eternal joy and optimism, through the songs and music we share.
- We value participation of singers regardless of age or skill level.
- We value performing a wide variety of choral music including traditionally underrepresented genres.

## OUR PARAMETERS

The following statements represent the organization's commitment in demonstrating elevated and ethical behaviors in order to focus on the health and progress of the Stockton Chorale. We believe each statement represents equal value. Accordingly, we adopt and endorse the following statements for our individual and collective behavior:

- We will make decisions based on what is best in moving the organization forward into progress and into the future.
- We commit to thoughtful planning and inclusion of all stakeholders, including programming, outreach, and equitable access representative of the diversity and cultures in our community.
- We commit to living as a caring and cohesive organization through a system of support for all ensembles.
- We will always provide our community with high quality service and performances which are physically and emotionally safe environments.
- We expect members to use behavior or language that builds dignity and worth of any individual or group.
- We will focus our resources and efforts on fulfilling our mission and objectives.

## Ensembles

Founded in 1952 by Arthur J. Holton II, the Stockton Chorale began as an auditioned community chorus. The organization has since grown to a family of five ensembles

representing singers of all ages and abilities from throughout the Central Valley. All ensembles, with the exception of the Stockton Singers, include an audition in keeping with the tradition of the Chorale's history.

***The Stockton Chorale:*** Our flagship chorus is composed of 60-85 members. The Stockton Chorale is an auditioned ensemble that focuses on choral music and masterworks that includes classical, contemporary, and music of underrepresented composers and cultures. Examples of the Stockton Chorale's recent performances include "Music of Asia and The Pacific Islands", featuring local artists Ryan Vang, Brian Bui, Chinese Lion Dancing by the Chinese Benevolent Association and Polynesian Dancing by 'Anapa Nui, Finzi's "Intimations of Immortality" in collaboration with Delta College Choir, "Music of Mexico" featuring the Northern California Mariachi Bonitas, Handel's Messiah, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, and holiday concerts in collaboration with the Stockton Symphony.

***The Master Chorale:*** A more intimate ensemble that is also an auditioned ensemble composed of 16-24 members. Master Chorale focuses on chamber works and other advanced repertoire.

***The Stockton Singers:*** An ensemble that requires no audition and is perfect for first-time singers and those looking for a more relaxed choral experience. The Stockton Singers perform throughout the community of Stockton supporting events and reaching audiences who may have limited access to attend evening concerts, in addition to participating in the Chorale's holiday and spring concerts.

***Valley Youth A Cappella:*** This ensemble is designed for students in grades 9-12. Students rehearse and sing modern and traditional a cappella music.

***The Stockton Youth Chorale:*** The Youth Chorale performs a variety of genres and styles of music and is designated for singers in grades 3-8.

The season of the Chorale typically runs from August through May. Auditions are held at the beginning of each season in August for all ensembles, except the Stockton Singers where auditions are not required. Any new singers wishing to join following the holiday season may audition for the second semester of the season in January. (Please note auditions for the Master Chorale are held only in August for the season. The Artistic Director and Conductors may hold further auditions as they deem necessary.

The Chorale season generally includes four (4) concert sets. In addition to our own concerts, the Chorale may be invited to perform with other community groups such as the Stockton Symphony.

### **The Chorale Staff and Leaders**

We are grateful and so very fortunate to have fantastic artistic and support staff in our organization.

<b>Nate Widelitz</b> Artistic Director Conductor	Stockton Chorale (Large Chorale) Master Chorale
<b>Michael Hernandez</b> Assistant Conductor	All singing groups
<b>Joan Calonico</b> Conductor	Stockton Youth Chorale Valley Youth A Cappella
<b>Ric Campero</b> Conductor	Stockton Singers
Accompanists	<b>Matt Baer</b> (Stockton Chorale & Master Chorale) <b>Rebecca Nelson</b> (Stockton Singers) <b>Donna Smith</b> (Stockton Youth Chorale)
<b>Donna Deutscher</b> Office Clerk	(209) 951-6494 office@stocktonchorale.org
SECTION LEADERS for ADULT CHOIRS	<p><b><u>LARGE &amp; MASTER CHORALES</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sopranos: Debbie Hernandez (mddez@comcast.net)</li> <li>• Altos: Joan Calonico (joanecalonico@gmail.com)</li> <li>• Tenors: Mike Hernandez (mddez@comcast.net)</li> <li>• Basses: Mark Calonico (Mcalon53@comcast.net)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>STOCKTON SINGERS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sopranos &amp; Altos: Jan Taylor (jwestontaylor@yahoo.com)</li> <li>• Tenors &amp; Basses: Rex Hamilton (Rhamilton1@pacific.edu)</li> </ul>

Please contact your Section Leader for any concerns or questions regarding rehearsals, performances, your section and ensemble. Section Leaders also support break-out sessions for sectionals during rehearsals and may provide additional information for your section as directed from the conductor. In our commitment to fostering and building a positive, supportive culture for all singers, it is expected that any concerns with fellow colleagues and peers **must first be addressed with the Section Leader**. Section Leaders are the “go-to person” for any initial questions and concerns.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Singers are expected to attend all rehearsals and concerts during a semester, including with the Stockton Symphony. Upon reviewing the season calendar, each singer will be asked to complete a commitment form at the beginning of each semester. We expect that all singers participate in all concerts each semester. However, we know that there are emergency conflicts that arise. Those conflicts will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Please communicate with your Section Leader and your conductor as soon as the conflict is known.

**Attendance is taken at every rehearsal and concert by Section Leaders. If you are unable to make a rehearsal or performance, please contact your Section Leader. Attendance and punctuality records are reviewed throughout the season. Please note that a poor attendance record (missing 3 or more rehearsals) may also affect a singer's ability to perform in the concert of that semester or re-admission to the Stockton Chorale. If a singer misses more than 3 rehearsals for a performance, the Conductor will determine if the singer is able to perform in that particular concert depending on the difficulty and amount of rehearsal missed.**

Buddy System: If a singer is unable to attend a rehearsal, they are still responsible for making up the material missed before the next rehearsal. To minimize what an absent singer misses, each singer should have a buddy (from their voice part) by the end of the fourth rehearsal. If you are going to miss a rehearsal, it is your responsibility to contact your buddy in advance and ask them to take notes. Buddies will take careful notes on all aspects of the rehearsal including changes in voicing, marking, dynamics, releases pronunciation, tone color, etc. as well as additions and changes in dates and times of rehearsals. Please arrange to obtain these notes, write them into your music, and learn the material you missed prior to the start of the next rehearsal. Section Leaders are another resource for any changes and markings from rehearsals.

## **SCHEDULES**

The full rehearsal and performance calendar for all ensembles is available online on the "Member Resources" page at [www.stocktonchorale.org](http://www.stocktonchorale.org). The password to access the "Member Resources" page is: **ajholt!** Further additions or changes may occasionally be necessary as the season progresses.

Any changes or additions to the season calendar will be noted in our weekly email communication called Noteworthy. Changes will be updated on our Member Resources online calendar. **Singers are responsible for noting these changes.** Please be sure to check emails each week for Chorale information.

**Rehearsals are held at Central United Methodist Church located at  
3700 Pacific Avenue in Stockton.**



**The schedule for the 2025-2026 season is as follows:**

MONDAYS	Stockton Youth Chorale	4:00 – 5:30 p.m.	Choir Room
TUESDAYS	Stockton Singers	5:30 – 6:45 p.m.	Fireside Room
	Stockton Chorale	7:00 – 8:25 p.m.	Fireside Room
	Master Chorale	8:35 - 9:30 p.m.	
WEDNESDAYS	Valley Youth A Cappella	4:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Choir Room
THURSDAYS	Stockton Youth Chorale	4:00 – 5:30 p.m.	Choir Room
	Valley Youth A Cappella	<u>5:30 - 7:30 p.m.</u> August 29, 2024 September 26, 2024 October 24, 2024 November 21, 2024	

## **MUSIC**

Our Assistant Conductor, Mike Hernandez, will oversee a Library Committee to assist singers and conductors in preparing music for distribution and return for filing. For assistance, please contact:

Stockton Chorale & Master Chorale:

- Debbie Hernandez (mddez@comcast.net)

Stockton Singers:

- Jan Taylor (jwestontaylor@yahoo.com)
- Rex Hamilton (Rhamilton1@pacific.edu)

Valley Youth A Cappella:

- Jan Taylor (jwestontaylor@yahoo.com)
- Joan Calonico (joanecalonico@gmail.com)

Stockton Youth Chorales:

- Joan Calonico (joanecalonico@gmail.com)

**What to know about your music:**

1. Music is either loaned to the singers from the Stockton Chorale Library or other source or purchased by the singers.
2. If the music is borrowed, you may mark it only in pencil. Never use markers, pens, or highlighters in borrowed scores.
3. Paperclips may be used, but not staples or glue. Repair rips with Magic Mending Tape only. Please erase marking and remove paper clips before returning music after a concert set.
4. Borrowed music must be returned immediately, generally at the last concert of the set. Sign it out carefully!
5. We sometimes borrow music from other institutions. Be particularly careful with this and be sure to return it on time.
6. Black folders must be used for all concerts unless notified otherwise. A great place or resource to purchase a high-quality choral folder is at [www.musicfolder.com](http://www.musicfolder.com).

## **SINGER STANDARDS**

Singers are expected to exhibit appropriate decorum as representatives of the Chorale. The Artistic Director has full discretion to evaluate whether a singer's behavior disqualifies them from participating in a rehearsal or performance. The Director of each ensemble and the Board of Directors will evaluate any behaviors divisive or disruptive to the organization's health and its membership.

**We are part of ensembles who are working together to present a unified and artistic performance. Learning your part on your own is very important, but attendance at rehearsals is even more important. Ensemble develops in the context of rehearsal that's why no rehearsal can ever truly be "made up." We understand that life happens to all of us, but we do want to deliver musically and expressively engaging concerts for our audiences. Please communicate whenever attendance is becoming an issue for you. We care about and want to support all members in our ensembles. Please help us know how to support you by communicating with us!**

Singing in a choir is a collaboration, and every member should strive to do their part to support the group. The standards listed below are important to the growth and success of each ensemble and our ability to achieve our musical goals. Every member is expected to adhere to the following:

1. With the continued concerns regarding the spread of illness and variants of Covid, the organization is fully committed to ensuring a safe and healthy gathering for rehearsals. Please familiarize yourself with the Chorale's Self-Attestation Form for guidance and procedures before attending rehearsals and performances. Every member is expected to:
  - a. Use the Self-Attestation Form prior to rehearsals, meetings, or performances.
  - b. Stay home if experiencing any symptoms of illness.
2. Rehearsals begin promptly.
  - Chairs will be arranged prior to rehearsals. It would be so very helpful if we would please visit and take care of Chorale business in the Lobby.
  - Arrive early so you have time to greet friends, find your seat, get music and pencils out, etc. **before** rehearsal begins.
3. Bring ALL your music and a pencil (not pen) to every rehearsal, including dress rehearsals and concert warm-ups.
4. There is usually a 10-minute break for socializing and other necessities.
  - On Tuesday evenings, it would be so very helpful if all singers would please move their belongings immediately at dismissal, then move to the lobby so that we can be ready for the next rehearsal.

5. Communication with singers will be via e-mail and group announcements at rehearsals. This includes the weekly email, the Noteworthy. Please check your emails regularly and make notes of important announcements. If you do not have email access, please be sure to connect with another singer to get the weekly information. You may want to keep handouts in your music folder for future reference.
6. Please support each other and our musical work by not talking during rehearsals. Any conversation, including discussion of the music, is distracting for you and those around you. If you have a question, please raise your hand at an appropriate time to get the conductor's attention. Please keep your questions limited to the musical sections the ensemble is working on at that moment. If you were not able to ask your question while we were working on that section, please ask after rehearsal.
7. Please pay attention even when the conductor is working with another choral section. When your section is included, you will not need to ask where the conductor is starting.
8. If a specific seating chart has been given, please sit in your assigned seat. Each concert may require a different arrangement. Please remain attentive and flexible.
9. For the sake of those with allergies, refrain from using scented products of any sort (cologne, lotions, hairspray, etc.) during rehearsals and performances.
10. Take care of each other and our community. Carpool if possible, always leave rehearsal with another person, and if you are one of the last to leave, make sure everyone is in a functioning car before driving away.
11. In our commitment to fostering and building a positive, supportive culture for all singers, it is expected that any concerns with fellow colleagues and peers must first be addressed with the Section Leader. Section Leaders are the "go-to person" for any questions and concerns.

Large Chorale & Master Chorale Section Leaders:

- Sopranos: Debbie Hernandez (mddez@comcast.net)
- Altos: Joan Calonico (joanecalonico@gmail.com)
- Tenors: Mike Hernandez (mddez@comcast.net)
- Basses: Mark Calonico (Mcalon53@comcast.net)

Stockton Singers Section Leaders:

- Jan Taylor (jwestontaylor@yahoo.com)
- Rex Hamilton (Rhamilton1@pacific.edu)

**CONCERT UNIFORMS**

For assistance, please speak to your Section Leader and then contact the Chorale Office: [office@stocktonchorale.org](mailto:office@stocktonchorale.org).

## Women

1. Dress and shrug will be ordered for you once measurements are taken.
2. Pearl necklace.
3. Black, closed-toe, low heeled shoes.

## Men

1. Black, standard tuxedo jacket and pants.
2. Black **and** red cummerbund (Red is used at the holiday performances.)
3. Black **and** red bowties (Red is used at the holiday performances.)
4. Black dress shoes and black socks.
5. White tuxedo shirt.

## Polo Shirts and T-Shirts

At times polo shirts and t-shirts representing the organization and different ensembles are used. Please contact the Chorale Office when this need arises. The office does have a few extra polos and t-shirts in the office. Cost will vary between \$10-\$20 depending on what is in stock or needing to be ordered. [office@stocktonchorale.org](mailto:office@stocktonchorale.org)

## PERFORMANCES

Below are some helpful notes in preparing for Chorale performances:

- For technical or dress rehearsals, please allow additional time to park and to find the warm-up room. No concert attire required for technical rehearsals
- For performances, arrive in concert clothes unless specifically instructed otherwise, and please allow additional time to park and to find the warm-up room.
- For the health and wellness of all singers, please, no perfume or scented products including lotion, hairspray, etc.
- Bathrooms at most halls are inadequate so it may be difficult to change clothes in bathrooms. When performing with the Stockton Symphony, we are also sharing facilities with the orchestra players. Bathroom and hall space is tight; be aware and accommodate your fellow musicians graciously.

During Performances:

- Carry black music folder closed and away from the audience.
- Walk swiftly and gracefully onto the stage without talking.

- Always enter and exit the risers by designated aisles. Do not step over chairs or create new pathways. Never walk through the orchestra's seats, even when they are empty.
- In the absence of specific instructions, stand and sit silently on cue from the conductor. If the conductor appears to have forgotten a stand cue, stand on the downbeat. After bows, sit with the concertmaster and remain seated until signaled by the conductor.
- Keep your music folder open during a solo, ready to sing. Do not follow during a solo or orchestral interlude except as needed to sing well. At other times, keep binders closed unless otherwise instructed.
- Turn pages silently.
- At the end of the work, remain motionless until the conductor relaxes their arms. The sound echoing in the hall after the last note is sometimes the most beautiful in a concert.

#### Other Information for Performances:

- Please refrain from specifically acknowledging friends or family from the stage.
- Take responsibility for the order and cleanliness of the spaces we use. If you see trash, dispose of it.
- Unless we are performing at Atherton Auditorium, there is no professional stage crew – rather they are your colleagues who have volunteered. Be aware of the setup work that is being done and either help or get out of the way of those working.
- Safety is the responsibility of every singer and all staff personnel. Use caution and move furniture etc. only if directed to do so.
- Due to liability concerns, contractual obligations, and artistic considerations, singers must not consume alcohol, smoke, or use illegal drugs during Chorale rehearsals and performances.

#### **MEMBER TUITION**

There are two semesters per concert season. Please note the following tuition schedule for each semester:

#### Tuition Fees for Each Singing Group

- Youth Chorale: \$185 per semester; \$370 per season
- Valley Youth A Cappella: \$135 per semester; \$270 per season
- Stockton Singers: \$135 per semester; \$270 per season
- Stockton Chorale and Master Chorale: \$160 per semester; \$320 per season

Any singer participating in more than one group, the higher fee is due for the semester, not both. For example, if a singer sings in both the Stockton Chorale and the Stockton Singers, the semester fee is only \$160 for both groups, not the group fees added together.

- Tuition fees should not be a financial burden to keep one from singing with the Chorale. We have a Scholarship Program! The form is available on our Chorale website to fill out and it will anonymously be forwarded to the Chorale office. Please reach out and speak to our President, Erin Parra, by contacting office at: [office@stocktonchorale.org](mailto:office@stocktonchorale.org), (209) 951-6494.
- Link for Scholarship Form: [2025-2026 Scholarship Program](#)

Information shared on tuition needs will remain confidential for distribution and ensuring our member tuition concerns are addressed. Confidential partial scholarships are also available. Please contact the Chorale Office to make arrangements for a partial scholarship or payment plan. The Chorale attempts to make partial scholarships available to all those who need them, however you are responsible for making alternative arrangements should you need them.

Tuition fees are non-refundable after the first two rehearsal dates of the Stockton Chorale in any Chorale semester except by vote of the Board of Directors.

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*The success of our groups depends on each member, individually and collectively.  
We are thrilled you have chosen to sing with us, and we look forward to  
making beautiful music together this season!*

**THE STOCKTON CHORALE**  
**Discrimination, Harassment and Disability Policy**

Board Approved: 03 October 2022

Membership on the Board of Directors is contingent on upholding the policies described below. All Board members, staff, participants, and guest performers in the organization, The Stockton Chorale, will be advised of this policy and provided a written copy of it. Access to these Discrimination, Harassment and Disability policies will be provided on the Stockton Chorale website for all members and the public.

For the purpose of this policy “**members**” refers to any of the following participants in The Stockton Chorale: Singers (adult and youth), Artistic Staff, accompanists, instrumentalists, guest soloists, volunteers, office staff (paid or unpaid), and its Board of Directors.

The Stockton Chorale is committed to an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. “Environment” includes the settings for work, musical rehearsals and performances, meetings and social events. Each member has the right to work and volunteer in a respectful atmosphere that promotes equal and equitable opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment. This policy forbids discrimination and harassment regarding ethnicity, skin color, nationality, age, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, religion, political affiliation, physical or mental disability status, and any other characteristic protected by state, federal or local employment discrimination laws. The Stockton Chorale expects that all relationships among persons in the workplace, meetings, and musical and social gatherings will be courteous and free of bias, prejudice, discrimination, and harassment.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, making unwanted sexual comments, advances and requests for sexual favors where either:

1. Submission to such conduct is made an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment, musical activity, volunteer activity, membership on the Board of Directors, or any ensemble; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of employment or audition decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual’s work or musical performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or musical environment.



Any member who violates this policy is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment or volunteer duties, expulsion from the Board of Directors or expulsion from the Stockton Chorale.

Examples of unlawful harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments.
- Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, e-mail and faxes or gestures.
- Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with work directed at an employee because of the employee's sex or other protected characteristic.
- Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests in order keep one's job, or place in the choir, maintain or avoid some other loss, and offers of employment or musical benefits in return for sexual favors.
- Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report unlawful or forbidden harassment.

Any member who believes he or she has been harassed by another member of The Stockton Chorale should promptly report the facts of the incident and the name(s) of the individual(s) involved to the current president of the Board. If that is not feasible, the member should report this information to any member of the Board of Directors, or the Office Manager, who will convey the complaint to the President or a responsible person designated by the president.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Board of Directors of the Stockton Chorale, or the Board's representative, will undertake a prompt, thorough, objective and good faith investigation.

If the organization determines that harassment has occurred, effective remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances involved. Any member determined by the organization to be responsible for harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from the Stockton Chorale as described above.

Members will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint or assisting in a complaint or investigation process. Retaliation by members against any complainant or anyone assisting in a harassment investigation will be considered a new incident of forbidden discrimination or harassment.

### **Regarding Sexual Harassment of Minors**

Any report of sexual harassment of a minor or youth will be reported immediately to a local law enforcement agency for investigation. For the purpose of this document, “law enforcement agency” refers to the relevant police or sheriff’s department, or a Child Protective Services agency.

Any member who suspects sexual harassment or assault of a minor member of The Stockton Chorale should immediately report such suspicions to a law enforcement agency. In addition, that member is required to report such suspicion, and any reports made to law enforcement, excluding Child Protective Services, to the president of the Board.

If the suspected behavior is determined not criminal by law enforcement, the Board of Directors will have the suspected behavior investigated as described above and take action accordingly.