



**ELK ISLAND REGIONAL HONOR
CHOIRS ASSOCIATION**

**CHORISTER
HANDBOOK**

2023/2024

www.elkislandchoirs.ca

Welcome to the Elk Island Regional Honor Choirs Association!

This organization has been in existence since 1984, and currently operates two auditioned choirs for students residing in Strathcona County and surrounding areas.

The choirs exist to enrich the musical experience of gifted amateur singers and are funded in part by membership fees, fundraising, and contributions from both local and provincial arts funding organizations.

This handbook is designed to prepare singers and their parents for the coming year of music-making, and to answer some frequently asked questions.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Elk Island Regional Honor Choirs Association is to promote excellence in musical education by establishing and maintaining a choir or choirs composed of gifted and interested children selected from students residing in Strathcona County and surrounding areas in the province of Alberta.

THE CHOIRS

All of the choirs are auditioned choirs and consist of some of the finest young singers in this area. There is some overlap between the choirs to accommodate singers of varying maturity and experience level. If you have any questions about your child's transition between choirs, please discuss this with your child's musical director.

JUNIOR HONOUR CHOIR

Singers in Grades 2-6

MONDAY Rehearsals

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

F.R. HAYTHORNE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL (new location)

300 Colwill Blvd., Sherwood Park, AB

SECONDARY HONOUR CHOIR

Singers in Grades 7-12

MONDAY Rehearsals

6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

F.R. HAYTHORNE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL (new location)

300 Colwill Blvd., Sherwood Park, AB

ELK ISLAND REGIONAL HONOUR CHOIRS 2023-2024 CHOIR YEAR

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	EXTRA REQUIREMENTS
CHOIR REGISTRATION & AUDITION DAY	Sunday, September 10, 2023 1:00 – 2:30 pm	Sherwood Park United Church 20 Fir Street, Sherwood Park (enter through doors near parking lot)	New chorister auditions and returning chorister registrations	Payment of registration fees and complete registration forms
JUNIOR CHOIR REHEARSALS BEGINS	Monday, September 11, 2023 5:00 – 6:00 pm	F.R. Haythorne Junior High 300 Colwill Blvd., Sherwood Park in the music room		
SECONDARY CHOIR REHEARSALS BEGINS	Monday, September 11, 2023 6:30 – 8:00 pm	F.R. Haythorne Junior High 300 Colwill Blvd., Sherwood Park in the music room		
FALL BOTTLE DRIVE	Monday, September 25, 2023 4:45 – 6:45 pm	F.R. Haythorne Junior High 300 Colwill Blvd., Sherwood Park (5:45 – 6:45 pm)	Bottle truck will be in parking lot for convenient bottle drop off.	
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	Monday, September 25, 2023 6:45 – 7:45 pm	F.R. Haythorne Junior High 300 Colwill Blvd., Sherwood Park in the library	Attendance is required by at least one parent per family.	
REGISTRATION FEES ARE DUE IN FULL	September 30, 2023			
CITY HALL SINGS 2023 – Secondary Choir	October 2023			
FUNDRAISING (Oct & Nov) – Raffle tickets for cash prizes AND Christmas wreaths/arrangements	Raffle Tickets will be available at the AGM Deadline for Christmas orders TBA		All choristers are required to sell at least one book of 5 tickets	
WINTERFEST 2023 (formerly Festival of Trees) PERFORMANCE	Saturday, November 4, 2023 9:00 am – 4:00 pm	County Hall – Agora Performance time - TBA		

ELK ISLAND REGIONAL HONOUR CHOIRS 2023-2024 CHOIR YEAR

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	EXTRA REQUIREMENTS
JUNIOR CHOIR SCHOOL TOUR & FIELD TRIP	November 2023 Details TBA	The three elementary schools will be announced later	Junior Choir will tour & perform at 3 schools in the morning & field trip for lunch and recreational activity in the pm	Costs are included in registration fees.
CHRISTMAS CONCERT	Sunday, December 10, 2023 at 4:00 pm	Bethel Lutheran Church 298 Bethel Drive, Sherwood Park	Doors open at 3:30 pm Chorister call times TBA	50-50 tickets will be sold prior to the concert
AUDITIONS AND REGISTRATIONS FOR SECOND HALF OF SEASON	Sunday, January 7, 2024 1:00 – 2:30 pm	Please contact choir manager to schedule an audition (enter through doors near parking lot)		
FIRST DAY OF REHEARSALS IN 2024	Monday, January 8, 2024	F.R. Haythorne Junior High 300 Colwill Blvd., Sherwood Park in the music room		
NEW YEAR BOTTLE DRIVE	January 2025 Details TBA	F.R. Haythorne Junior High 300 Colwill Blvd., Sherwood Park (5:45 – 6:45 pm)	Bottle truck will be in parking lot for convenient bottle drop off.	
FUNDRAISER (Feb) – Purdy’s Chocolate	Deadline for orders TBA	Delivery will be prior to Valentine’s Day		
CAMP NAKAMUN SECONDARY CHOIR RETREAT	Tuesday & Wednesday Feb. 27/28, 2024 (overnight)	Camp Nakamun Busby, Alberta	Retreat at the camp for music workshops and recreational activities.	Elk Island Choirs subsidizes the cost. Approximate remaining cost per chorister is \$130.00.
FUNDRAISER (Apr) – West Coast Seeds	Deadline for orders TBA	Delivery will be scheduled for early April 2024		
EASTER BOTTLE DRIVE	April 2024 Details TBA	F.R. Haythorne Junior High 300 Colwill Blvd., Sherwood Park (5:45 – 6:45 pm)	Bottle truck will be in parking lot for convenient bottle drop off.	
CHOIR PHOTOS DAY	Spring 2024 During regular rehearsal times		Choristers should wear their choir t-shirts.	

ELK ISLAND REGIONAL HONOUR CHOIRS 2023-2024 CHOIR YEAR

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	EXTRA REQUIREMENTS
JUNIOR CHOIR SCHOOL TOUR & FIELD TRIP	April 2024 Details TBA	The three elementary schools will be announced later	Junior Choir will tour & perform at 3 schools in the morning & field trip for lunch and recreational activity in the pm	Costs are included in registration fees.
SPRING CONCERT	Monday, May 13, 2024 7:00 pm	Bethel Lutheran Church 298 Bethel Drive, Sherwood Park	Doors open at 6:30 pm Chorister call times TBA	50-50 tickets will be sold prior to the concert

Important Dates



Rehearsals (Mondays unless posted otherwise)

PLEASE NOTE NEW LOCATION - Rehearsals for the Junior and Secondary Choirs are held at F.R. Haythorne Junior High School, 300 Colwill Blvd., Sherwood Park in the music room

2023

Sunday, September 10 from 1:00 – 2:30 pm

Auditions & Registration Day (Sherwood Park United Church)

September 11 / 18 / 25

October 2 / 16 / 23 / 30

November 13 / 20 / 27

December 4

2024

January 8 / 15 / 22 / 29

February 5 / 12 / 26

March 4 / 11 / 18

April 8 / 15 / 22 / 29

May 6

Annual General Meeting – F.R. Haythorne Junior High School

Monday, September 25, 2023

Attendance is REQUIRED by at least one parent per family.

Concerts

Christmas Concert

Sunday, Dec 10, 2023

Bethel Lutheran Church,
Sherwood Park

Spring Concert

Monday, May 13, 2024

Bethel Lutheran Church,
Sherwood Park

Camp Nakamun Workshop

Tuesday, Feb 27 & Wednesday, Feb 28, 2023 (Secondary Choir only)

Performances

City Hall Sings 2023

October 2023

TBA

Winterfest 2023

November 4, 2023

County Hall - Agora

Junior Choir School Tours

November 2023 and April 2024

Bottle Drive Fundraisers

Monday - September 25, 2023 and January 2024 & April 2024 (exact dates TBA)

REGISTRATION AND FEES



**Registration day is on SUNDAY, Sept. 10, 2023 (Time: 1 – 2:30 pm)
Sherwood Park United Church, 20 Fir Street, Sherwood Park**

Choristers who have not pre-registered in the spring are required to register on this day. If you are unable to attend this day, completed registration forms & payment can be mailed to:

PO Box 57131 RPO Eastgate, Sherwood Park, AB, T8A 5L7

Or email the forms to elkislandchoirs@gmail.com and e-transfer the registration fee prior to September 11, 2023.

Fee Information and Payment Policy

Registration fees are established by the Volunteer Executive and are reviewed annually. Registration fees represent less than half the full cost of a singer's participation in the choir. Additional funding is provided through operating grants and occasional special funding (concert ticket sales, casino, silent auction, raffle tickets, sponsorships, 50/50 tickets, bake sale, etc.)

Full payment must accompany the singer's registration form. The full registration fee will be required no later than September 30, 2023. Any fees received after September 30 will be subject to a \$25 late penalty fee. **Payment options include cash, cheque or e-transfer. Please make cheques payable to EIRHCA.** To qualify for the **early registration** discount of 5%, forms and fees must have been received by June 30, 2024.

Instructions for E-transfers

E-transfers should be sent to: elkislandchoirs@gmail.com

IMPORTANT: Be sure to include your chorister's name in the information section so our bookkeeper knows whose account to apply the funds to.

In the event of unforeseen circumstances, please contact the Choir Manager. Failure to contact the Choir Manager on or before September 30th may result in the temporary suspension or expulsion of the Choir member from the Choir.

A \$25.00 NSF charge will apply to any dishonored cheques. The EIRHCA reserves the right to insist upon full fee payment in the event any cheque is returned.

JUNIOR CHOIR \$450.00 (paid deposit will be applied & balance due Sept 30)

- Included in the annual fee is a Junior Choir T-shirt, Choir photo, and 2 school tour day field trip and activity.
- Costs for any other day trips and choir retreat are not included in annual fees.

SECONDARY CHOIR \$475.00 (paid deposit will be applied & balance due Sept 30)

Music Deposit \$ 50.00 (postdated cheque dated June 1, 2024)

- Included in the annual fee is a Secondary Choir T-shirt, Choir photo, subsidizing the Camp Nakamun cost and Community Concert participation
- Costs for touring, field trips and/or retreats are not included in annual fees unless specified

*You will be informed of any trip costs once they have been confirmed. Referrals and sponsorships can be used to offset costs for Choristers. See "Fundraisers" section of this Handbook.

COMMUNICATION



The Directors, Manager and a Volunteer Executive operate the Choirs. Please direct all questions and concerns that arise during the year to the following:

Choir Directors

Michelle Wiart (Vetro) – michelle.vetro@gmail.com

JUNIOR CHOIR

Angela McKeown - angelamcqn@gmail.com

SECONDARY CHOIR

The Choir Directors will also be available to you in person at the end of each choir rehearsal.

Choir Accompanists

Jess Agrell-Smith – jess.agrell@gmail.com

JUNIOR CHOIR

Rose Mellor - rose.t.mellor@gmail.com

SECONDARY CHOIR

Choir Manager – please contact choir manager with any questions or concerns

Diane Barilko – manager.elkislandchoirs@gmail.com

Phone# 780-920-2206

Bookkeeper / Business Administrator

Pamela White – elkislandchoirs@gmail.com

Elk Island Choirs Website: www.elkislandchoirs.ca

Please check our website. All important dates and general information can be found on our website.

Elk Island Choirs Social Media pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/elkislandchoirs>

<https://twitter.com/EIRHCA>

<https://www.instagram.com/elkislandchoirs/>

Be sure to “like” & “follow” our Facebook, Instagram, Twitter pages as they are a great source of updated choir information.



Email: elkislandchoirs@gmail.com

Be sure to check your emails regularly for news from your Choir Director or the Choir Manager. Important dates and information will be sent to the email address you provide on your registration form.



Mail:

The mailing address for the choir is:

PO Box 57131 RPO Eastgate, Sherwood Park, AB, T8A 5L7

The Wittenberg Scholarship

The Wittenberg family set up The Wittenberg Scholarship in honour of their daughter, Stephanie, who was killed in a tragic car accident. Stephanie was a member of the Elk Island Choirs who loved music and singing. In her memory, the scholarship is used to fully or partially offset the cost of registration for families who may have difficulty paying. Thank you to the family for sharing Stephanie's love for music through this annual scholarship in her name. Please contact the Choir Manager for more scholarship information. Applications for funding are reviewed by the Board. **The cut-off date is September 30 of each year.** A Board member will contact you directly with the decision.

Cancellation/Refund Policy



All choir membership refunds are pro-rated over a period of 9 months (September – May). Reimbursement of remaining fees will take effect the 1st day of the following month after cancellation notification was given (please refer to below scenarios). All refunds are subject to a \$50 processing fee. **There will be no refunds beyond October 31.** (Note: Extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Board on a case-by-case basis)

Example: "Kelly" withdraws from choir on Oct 12 and "Jennifer" withdraws on Oct 31. They are each considered to have been in the choir September and October and receive 7/9's of their registration fees back. (i.e. A secondary choir registration of \$475 would receive a refund of \$369.44 minus the \$50 processing fee for a total refund of \$319.44).

Attendance Policy

- ❖ **It is very important that choir members attend regularly, since a choral rehearsal teaches not only the music, but blends the sounds of the singers over time.** Singers or parents are expected to notify their director in advance for any planned absences from rehearsals or performances. In the event of an unplanned absence (illness or emergency) singers or parents must notify their director as soon as possible
- ❖ **If any member misses more than two rehearsals without proper notification, their membership will be reviewed.** We realize that singers are talented and often very busy people. Arrangements can be discussed with the Directors to accommodate sports or other arts activities that might otherwise prevent someone from being part of the choir or from attending regular rehearsals.

Behavior Policy

- ❖ Disruptive or rude behavior will not be tolerated.
- ❖ **FIRST offence-** a verbal warning will be given.
- ❖ **SECOND offence-** the parents will be notified.
- ❖ **THIRD offence-** membership will be reviewed, with the chance of the choir member being suspended or expelled from the choir.

EXPECTATIONS

Choristers:

As a choir member I understand that:

- I am an ambassador for Elk Island Regional Honor Choirs and am expected to show pride in the choir.
- I will accept my placement in the choir and make every effort to participate in all rehearsals and performances.
- I will notify the Director in advance for any planned absences from rehearsals or performances. In the event of an unplanned absence (illness or emergency), I will notify the director as soon as possible.
- I will show respect for my fellow choir members, the Director, Accompanist, Manager, and Supervisors.
- I will exercise self-disciplined behavior at all times during rehearsals and performances.
- I will adhere to the choir attendance policy and always give my best effort.
- **I will make my parents aware of all Choir newsletters and/or other printed information received at rehearsal or from the website (www.elkislandchoirs.ca)**
- Failure to comply with the above expectations could jeopardize my participation in the choir.
- **All choristers are to treat their choir folder and its contents with respect. All items given to the choristers are expected to be returned in excellent condition.**

Parents:

As a parent of a choir member I understand that:

- ❖ I am responsible to ensure that my child has transportation to and from all rehearsals, performances and festivals, paying due attention to drop-off and pick-up times.
- ❖ I am responsible for notifying the Director in advance for any planned absences for my child. In the event of an unplanned absence (illness or emergency), I will notify the director as soon as possible.
- ❖ **I am to attend the Annual General Meeting on Monday, September 25, 2023.**
- ❖ **I am to check the website (www.elkislandchoirs.ca) on a regular basis for updated choir information and read all choir emails and newsletters received by my child.**
- ❖ I will ensure that my child understands the commitment she/he is making and the importance of self-disciplined behavior at all times during rehearsals and performances.
- ❖ I recognize that this Choir Association is run by volunteers and that the success of the same is based upon the participation and cooperation of all members. I will consider being available to volunteer to help ensure my child has the best choral experience possible.
- ❖ I undertake to pay the Choir membership fees established by the Elk Island Regional Honor Choirs Association in accordance with the payment policy.

Elk Island Regional Honor Choirs Association:

As the EIRHC Association:

- ✓ We will provide training and instruction in both the theoretical and practical principles of music, with particular emphasis on choral music and its performance. To this end, we will provide highly qualified Directors and Accompanists.
- ✓ We will work to operate a viable and efficient volunteer organization in support of the artistic and educational goals of the choirs.
- ✓ We will update our website; provide newsletters and/or other electronic or printed announcements to ensure adequate communication between the Association and Choir families.
- ✓ We will manage the Choir's financial affairs prudently and diligently. Such management to include; fundraising, applying for government funding grants, as available, and the timely collection of fees.

DRESS CODE

Choristers are required to follow a dress code for all performances. The Directors will inform choristers and parents of specifics prior to each concert. Please read over the following carefully.

CASUAL



The Choir Association will provide a choir t-shirt to all registered choristers. The choir t-shirt, together with jeans, comprises the casual dress code for all choirs at functions such as school tours.

FORMAL



Certain choir performances during the season will require formal attire. Some items will be provided by the Association and some are to be provided by the chorister. For example, choristers may be asked to wear their own, all-black, dress attire.

If you are unsure, please check with your child's Choir Director for further instruction.

Touring & Day Trips

The choir association has included touring in their roster of activities. Each choir tours at a level that is appropriate to their age group. Additional fundraising opportunities may be provided, particularly for out-of-province tours.



Secondary Choir - every second year is a touring year. In 2019, the choir travelled to Vancouver BC. The Secondary Choir did not travel in 2020, 2021 and 2022 due to the travel restrictions in place and COVID-19 still a concern. The Secondary Choir might schedule a tour in the near future should travelling be approved by the Board of Directors.

The Junior Choir – is scheduled for 2 school tour day trips in November 2023 and April 2024. School tours are an excellent way to help to showcase our singers and attract new members from within the school system.

FUNDRAISERS

Registration fees do not cover all costs of the EIRHCA, therefore the association must rely on **grants** and **special funding** that is applied for throughout the choir year.



Fundraising is another way for the association to acquire the necessary funds to keep things running. **It is essential for choristers and their families to participate in these fundraising opportunities so the Association will continue to have the funds to provide outstanding musical education for all choristers.** Through fundraising, the choir receives a percentage from the sales to help offset some of our operating costs. This year, we will be fundraising through Growing Smiles, Purdy's Chocolates and West Coast Seeds. In previous years, we fundraised with the Taste of Ukraine and Widynowski's Sausage House.

Fundraising opportunities this year will include:

- **Raffle Tickets**
- **Bottle Drives**
- **50/50 Tickets**
- **Sponsorship/Advertising**- Choristers will obtain a 25% chorister credit for any advertising they bring in for the concert programs. This credit can be used towards registration fees, Camp Nakamun or towards any other tours.
- **Referral Credits** - \$25.00 for referral of any new chorister who auditions and joins

Please watch for more information about these fundraisers as the choir year unfolds. **We rely heavily on the success of each fundraiser when setting the budget for the season. Please support each fundraising campaign to ensure its success.** Thank you so much.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Where do I find information or forms I may need?

All information and forms are posted on our website: www.elkislandchoirs.ca or you can contact the Choir Manager, Diane Barilko at 780-920-2206 or email manager.elkislandchoirs@gmail.com.

Be sure to follow our Facebook page for up-to-date information.



Can anybody sing in the choirs?

Both levels of choir are auditioned. Your child must audition for the Director before being allowed to sing with Elk Island Regional Honor Choirs Association.

Why do I need to give a postdated cheque dated June 1st of the following year for a music deposit fee for SECONDARY choir?

We pay a steep fee for all music, and any music we lose must be replaced. Over the past several years there has been an increase of non-returned music, causing us to impose the music deposit fee. Failure to return all of your music will result in your cheque being cashed.

This applies to secondary choir only

How is the Choir Association funded?

We are funded through operating grants from various government agencies, concert ticket revenue, fundraising revenue, chorister registration fees, as well as casino funds (every three years).

What is a chorister credits account?

A portion of the money raised by your chorister from certain fundraisers such as Sponsorship (advertising in the concert programs) will go into a special account just for them. Also, if your chorister refers another person to the choir, and that person auditions and joins the choir, \$25.00 will be added to your chorister's account. This money may be used to help pay for registration fees, touring, or other choir activities. Any unused money from these accounts will go to the Wittenberg Scholarship Fund if your child is not returning. If your child is returning these funds will be held in his/her account for the following choir year. If at any time you would like to know what the balance is in your chorister's fundraising account, please contact the bookkeeper.

Will my child go on a major tour during the choir year?



Every level and every year are different but the general rule is that the Secondary Choir tours every other year. The Junior Choir will do various day tours or camps with no overnight trips. All tours are left to the discretion of the Directors and are optional for the choristers. Choir fees do not include tours. The Secondary Choir travelled to Vancouver, BC from April 11-14, 2019.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS continued...



Who gets to volunteer? What are the Volunteer opportunities?

This Association depends on volunteers to make it a success. We hope that you will consider volunteering on a regular or as-needed basis, depending on your interests and availability. Please take the time to fill in the back portion of the registration form. All members are invited to volunteer.

Where will the Choir Concerts be located?

1. Christmas Concert – Bethel Lutheran Church

Sunday, December 10th at 4:00 pm
298 Bethel Drive
Sherwood Park

2. Spring Concert – Bethel Lutheran Church

Monday, May 13th at 7:00 pm
298 Bethel Drive
Sherwood Park



What factors determine where the concerts are held?

Acoustically Sherwood Park does not really have a venue for choral singing. Venues that work best are old style churches with wooden pews like McDouglas United Church in Edmonton. The biggest factor in selecting a venue for our concerts is, of course, availability. Both December and May are very busy times with all schools presenting their Christmas concerts in December and high schools in Sherwood Park presenting their drama productions in May. We also factor in accessibility for our guests, parking and size of the venue when selecting a venue.