

MUSIC

AT FIRST PRES

PERFORMING ARTS SERIES
2026-2027 SEASON

(Pics from our Kansas City Tour)





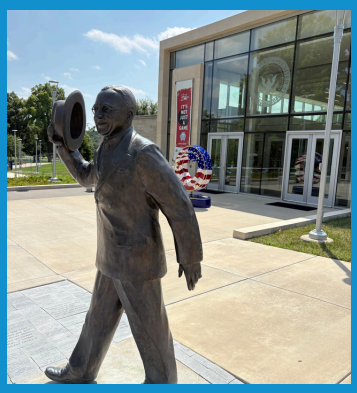












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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & ARTS

August 16 marked my 10-year work-iversarry at First Pres. While it is at once difficult and easy to believe, I remain truly grateful to work in a community that supports such a vibrant and multifaceted music ministry and am reminded how rare this is.

This year marks the 35th season of the Performing Arts Series at First Presbyterian Church of Davenport. Our commitment to showcasing the immense talent within our community while finding new ways to reach larger audiences remains steadfast. First Pres is a stronghold of the arts, of justice and advocacy, of intellect, of thoughtful worship, and of warm community. My fervent hope is that you find all of these qualities in our 2026-2027 PAS season.

Before introducing next season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the wonderful 2025-2026 season. Lyyra and Sangat offered breathtaking guest artist concerts; our Principal Organist Alex Gilson's movie soundtrack to *The General* was a fun time; a full and energetic audience enjoyed our Christmas Concert; the wealth of talent in our community was on full display in the touching musical *Tuck Everlasting*; and our choirs sang beautifully and meaningfully at the many special services throughout the year. In their second seasons, the Justice Choir of the Midwest and the Quad City Youth Choir sang powerfully and made important community connections.

This season promises to be full of excitement, beauty, and marvel. We welcome world-renowned Danish folk ensemble Stundom to kick off the season in October, and The Calla Project, a quintet comprised of five women trumpet players, in March.

Once again, Alex Gilson's concert in February will be an improvised soundtrack to a silent film, this time to Sergei Eisenstein's Soviet-era classic *Battleship Potemkin*. Advent at First Pres again includes a community organ recital and the Chamber Chorale's Lessons and Carols service and concludes with our Christmas Concert on December 20 that I can't wait to share with all of you! And finally, Broadway is back at First Pres as we conclude our season with the colorful, rollicking musical *Once Upon a Mattress* in June.

It is our sincere hope that you will join us for the many wonderful events happening at First Pres this season, and that you will share this brochure with your family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors; a central belief of the music ministries at First Pres is that good music is meant to be shared far and wide. We also ask that you consider continuing your support of the Performing Arts Series as a Benefactor Patron, or by becoming one for the first time. I deeply value your support and can't wait to embark on this new season with you!



STUNDOM

Tue., Oct. 13
7:30 PM

$15 Adults/$10 Students
Included in Benefactor Patron season ticket packages

The music of Stundom is Nordic in its essence: Inspired by the traditional dance music from their ancestors, the trio invites you into their wondrous world, blending folk traditions with classical chamber music and symphonic elements. Stundom is among the most acclaimed groups within New Nordic folk music in Denmark today. The trio has received widespread praise from both audiences and critics for their seamless fusion of traditional and contemporary expressions. Their latest album, 'Hvis ikke de er døde, lever de endnu' received 'Album of the Year' at the Danish Music Awards Roots 2025.

Stundom has performed at major festivals such as Roskilde Festival in Denmark and Celtic Connections in the UK. They have appeared on BBC Scotland and performed live on BBC Radio 3. In 2024, they were invited to the United States by the Danish String Quartet to perform at the Strings Music Festival, bringing their Nordic sound across the Atlantic for the first time.

With a blend of the violin, the cittern, and the piano, Emma Kragh-Elmøe, Villads Hoffmann and Julian Svejgaard share a rare musical chemistry and a strong sense for finely crafted melodies.



ADVENT @ FIRST PRES I: COMMUNITY ORGAN RECITAL

Sun., Nov. 29
4:00 PM

Free admission



ALEX GILSON

Principal Organist/Asst. Director of Music
First Presbyterian Church, Davenport



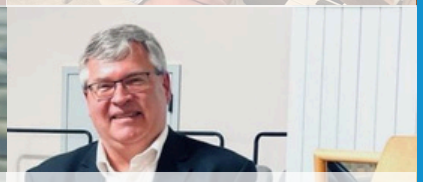
RILEY SINDT

Director of Parish Music
Trinity Lutheran Church, Davenport



COLLEEN DARLAND

Director of Music & Liturgy
Sacred Heart Cathedral, Davenport



MICHAEL ELSBERND

Director of Music Ministries
Trinity Cathedral, Davenport

We are pleased to once again launch our celebration of Advent at First Pres three-week concert series with a free afternoon recital on the Magnusson Memorial Organ. We are pleased to welcome three exciting guest organists (Michael Elsbernd, Colleen Darland, and Riley Sindt) alongside our Principal Organist Alex Gilson.

This concert will not only showcase the great musical talents of these four artists and bring together our four congregations, but will also illustrate the great diversity of Advent organ repertoire across several centuries of music history.

ADVENT @ FIRST PRES II: ADVENT LESSONS & CAROLS

Sun., Dec. 6
9:30 AM

Free admission

Rebroadcast on wvik Quad Cities NPR 90.3 FM

Advent at First Pres continues with a service featuring readings, hymns, and carols sung by the Chamber Chorale. This beloved service is an intimate way to prepare our hearts and voices for the season of expectancy that follows.

Because it is an enduring value of the FPC Chamber Chorale, this service features new and recent music by prominent composers of diverse backgrounds and styles, alongside choral music that is centuries old. Regardless, it is the ensemble's constant goal to present each piece in a way that is fresh, engaging, and of the highest quality of vocal artistry and sacred reverence. This year's service will feature music by John Tavener, Sarah Quartel, Cecilia McDowall, Andrej Makor, Graham Barber, and others.



ADVENT @ FIRST PRES III: THE FPC CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Sun., Dec. 20
4:00 PM

Free admission
Reserved seating included in Benefactor Patron season ticket packages

Annual Christmas Concerts at First Pres have become a much anticipated event in the Quad Cities. This year's concert will be on the third Sunday of December and will feature the Sanctuary Choir, Chamber Chorale, Vesper Bells, and Quad City Youth Choir, all accompanied by full orchestra and Principal Organist Alex Gilson.

This year's concert features a multitude of beloved Christmas carols. The centerpiece of this year's concert is Robert Shaw's lush and captivating *Many Moods of Christmas Suite No. 2*, one of four such suites of carols written for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus during Shaw's historic tenure as choral director. We are thrilled again to partner with the FPC Caring Closet, which provides free clothing and household items to members of our community.







ALEX GILSON - ORGAN + FILM: BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN

Fri., Feb. 5
7:30 PM

Free admission
Reserved seating included in Benefactor Patron season ticket packages

Assistant Director of Music/Principal Organist Alex Gilson's solo recital this year again combines two great art forms: music and classic cinema. Sergei Eisenstein's landmark Soviet epic film *Battleship Potemkin* from 1925 is considered one of the greatest films of all time by cinema scholars and critics. This hour-long movie recounts two of the significant events of the Russian Revolution of 1905: the mutiny of the ship workers against their officers on board the *Battleship Potemkin*, and the resulting police massacre following a demonstration in the Ukrainian sea port of Odessa. The substantial action sequences in this historic Soviet film are considered groundbreaking in the evolution of cinematography.

The silent film will be projected on First Pres's own silver screen while Alex accompanies the movie from the Magnusson Memorial Organ. Alex's accompaniment will be an improvised film score in the style of early Soviet-era film composers like Shostakovich and Prokofiev.

Bring a movie-loving friend and enjoy the film as it would have been shown in the early movie theaters with the added drama of Alex's virtuosic improvised musical scoring. Popcorn and other refreshments available for purchase. This movie is not rated; while generally appropriate for all audiences, the nature of the film's subject matter results in many instances of portrayed violence.





THE CALLA PROJECT

Sat., Mar. 13
7:30 PM

$15 Adults/$10 Students
Included in Benefactor Patron season ticket packages

The Calla Project is a dynamic ensemble dedicated to fostering collaboration and building community. With a passion for artistic exchange and mutual inspiration, The Calla Project aims to create connections that resonate beyond the concert hall by engaging composers, performers, and audiences alike in meaningful musical dialogues. With each performance, they cultivate an environment of mutual inspiration, presenting works that celebrate both contemporary voices and timeless classics in chamber music.

Comprised of passionate educators, The Calla Project is deeply invested in making chamber music accessible and transformative for every listener.

Through masterclasses, workshops, and innovative programming, The Calla Project bridges the gap between the stage and the studio, nurturing the next generation of musicians. Members of The Calla Project have performed with esteemed ensembles such as the Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra, Colorado Ballet, Boulder Symphony, Lubbock Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Brass Quintet, Aruba Symphony Festival Orchestra, and more.

The Calla Project debuted April 2024 at the University of Utah, and has enjoyed residencies across the United States. The core performing members of The Calla Project are Angela King, Adrianna Korey, Nathalie Mejia-Zec, Maryna Pohlman, and Madison Sinan.



FIRST PRES SPRING CONCERT

Sun., May 16
4:00 PM

Free admission.
Free-will offering to support the work of NAMI Greater Mississippi Valley

This year's FPC Spring Concert again revolves around an important component of Mental Wellness: Connection. Utilizing repertoire from many different styles, this special concert features the Sanctuary Choir, Chamber Chorale, Quad City Youth Choir, and Vesper Bells. While we seek to highlight the great need in our community and world for greater access to care, we also endeavor to provide calming and celebratory music.

We are thrilled to partner again with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of the Greater Mississippi Valley for this concert. NAMI provides advocacy, education, support and public awareness so that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives.

NAMI Greater Mississippi Valley
National Alliance on Mental Illness





BROADWAY MUSICAL: ONCE UPON A MATTRESS

Jun. 25-27
7:30 PM
4 PM on Sun.

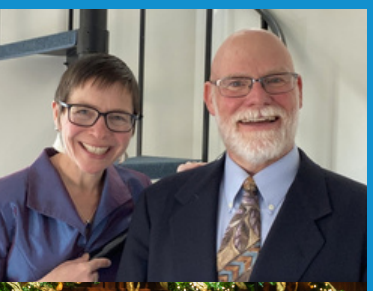
$15 Adults/$10 Students
Included in Benefactor Patron season ticket packages

Once again the Sanctuary of First Pres transforms into a theatre, transporting you in June to the medieval fairytale world of *Once Upon a Mattress*. Based on the classic Hans Christian Andersen tale "The Princess and the Pea," this award-winning musical first premiered on Broadway with Carol Burnett in the lead role in 1960, and has since seen a couple of successful revivals. The FPC production, appropriate for adults and young children, will feature a multi-generational cast with in-house and community talent, accompanied by a live band. Auditions take place in January.

From Concord Theatricals: "Many moons ago in a far-off place, Queen Aggravain decreed no couples could marry until her son, Prince Dauntless, found a bride. Princesses came from far and wide to win the hand of the prince, but none could pass the impossible tests given to them by the Queen. That is, until the 'shy' swamp princess, Winnifred the Woebegone, showed up. Would she be able to pass the Sensitivity Test, marry her prince and help Lady Larken and Sir Harry to the altar? Carried on a wave of wonderful songs, by turns hilarious and raucous, romantic and melodic, this rollicking show provides some side-splitting shenanigans."



SPECIAL WINTER SERVICES



Sun., Jan. 17
9:30 AM
Carnival Sunday with Ivory&Gold

Husband and wife Jazz duo Jeff (piano/vocals) and Anne (flute/vocals) Barnhart return to First Pres for a special morning of Jazz music as we celebrate the season of Carnival with a special focus on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Sun., Feb. 28
4:00 PM
A Service of Choral Evensong with the FPC Chamber Chorale

The FPC Chamber Chorale presents a special Service of Choral Evensong for the season of Lent, featuring music by T. Tertius Noble, Herbert Sumsion, Jocelyn Hagen, and Arvo Pärt.

NEW MUSIC @ FIRST PRES: DOMINICK DIORIO

Sun., Nov. 15
9:30 AM
Premiere Date

This Fall the Sanctuary Choir has the honor of premiering a newly commissioned SATB version of a work by esteemed composer and conductor Dominick DiOrio.

Recognized with The American Prizes in both Choral Composition (2014) and Choral Performance (2019). DiOrio is professor of music and chair of the department in choral conducting at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where he serves as director of NOTUS, Indiana University's storied contemporary vocal ensemble. He is also music director of the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia.

DiOrio's original music has been hailed for its keenly intelligent, evocative style, which shows "a tour de force of inventive thinking and unique colour" (*Gramophone*). His over 70 published works have appeared at major venues around the world including the Sydney Opera House, Washington National Cathedral, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall—as well as internationally in Austria, Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, The Netherlands, and the U.K.



JUSTICE CHOIR OF THE MIDWEST 2026-2027 SEASON

The Justice Choir of the Midwest announces its third season. The fall concert focuses on Racial Justice with a performance of Joel Thompson's *The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*. The spring concert is a celebration of Social Justice Heroes like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Harvey Milk, Miriam Makeba, and the millions of Baltic State citizens who participated in the Singing Revolution of the late 1980s.

Sun., Nov. 22 | 7:00 PM | **Racial Justice**

Presented in partnership with

Sun., Apr. 18 | 7:00 PM | **Justice Heroes**



Presented in partnership with

TAPESTRY farms

COMMUNITY CONCERTS: VOCAL ENSEMBLE QC

Fri., Dec. 11 | 7:00 PM | **Free admission**



VEQC, a Quad Cities-based community choir founded in 2017, is dedicated to bringing high-quality vocal music to the community—free of charge. The ensemble explores a diverse repertoire, showcasing the beauty and versatility of the human voice through captivating performances that span a wide range of musical styles. VEQC believes in the power of music to enrich lives and is committed to making exceptional musical experiences accessible to all.

VEQC's winter concert, "Nu er det jul igen / Now It Is Christmas Again," features classical choral music, favorite carols, and Scandinavian Christmas music.

COMMUNITY CONCERTS: CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY CHOIR

Tue., Jan. 12
6:00 PM

Free admission

The Creative Arts Academy Music Program is composed of 6th- 8th grade students and shares a campus with Sudlow Middle School. Each year, the musicians choose and prepare solo and small ensemble selections on their instrument of choice to perform for friends and family at their Winter Recital.

The CAA's Winter Recital is presented in conjunction with FPC's third annual juried art show featuring pieces from the visual art students at both the Creative Arts Academy and Sudlow Middle School as part of the church's longstanding partnership with both schools. The art will be available for viewing that evening in the Fellowship Hall, and the following night in a public exhibition from 6-7:30 PM. The theme of the exhibition is Amanda Gorman's poem "The Hill We Climb."



COMMUNITY CONCERTS: QUAD CITY YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Sun., May 9
7:00 PM

Tickets available at qcso.org

FPC continues its longstanding partnership with the Quad City Symphony Orchestra by hosting the Youth Symphony Orchestra for their May concert for a special concert including Michael Abels's *Global Warming* and Antonín Dvořák's *Symphony No. 8*.

The Quad City Youth Symphony Orchestra is the premiere youth orchestra in the region. Members perform several times throughout the year in a variety of rewarding performance settings, including the Side-by-Side concert. The ensemble has toured Portugal and Spain in 2026 and Germany and Czechia in 2023.



ENSEMBLES @ FIRST PRES

Contact Matt Bishop

Director of Music & Arts
bishop@fpcdavenport.org

SANCTUARY CHOIR

The Sanctuary Choir, the church's flagship ensemble, is one of the premiere adult church choirs in the Midwest. With a membership of 75 volunteer singers, the Sanctuary Choir offers a wide variety of great choral music at worship services on Sunday mornings from September through May, and select Sundays during the summer including the church's annual Jazz Liturgy during the Bix Jazz Festival. The choir has a rich history of providing great music in the Quad Cities, having been featured for over two decades as part of the Quad City Symphony Orchestra's Holiday Pops concerts and twice on national PBS-TV. The choir is dedicated to building Beloved Community through the sacred and healing act of singing together; as such, the choir believes its rehearsal and performance spaces to be safe spaces, open to all who are moved by self-expression through music. The choir is comprised of adults from age 18 to 90. The choir has commissioned and premiered a number of choral works and arrangements, including anthems by such renowned composers as Libby Larsen, Jonathan Dove, Saunder Choi, William Mathias, Alfred Fedak, Howard Helvey, John Gere, Gary Fry, Stephen Mager, Jay Flood, and Mack Wilberg. The choir has also worked with such distinguished composers and conductors as Jester Hairston, Andrew Carter, Dale Warland, and Tom Trenney. The choir has taken three international music outreach tours (Germany in 2018, Ireland in 2022, Italy in 2025) and three regional tours (Milwaukee in 2019, Twin Cities in 2023, Kansas city in 2026).

CHAMBER CHORALE

An auditioned subset of the Sanctuary Choir, the Chamber Chorale presents music intended for small ensembles from a span of nine centuries of the Western classical tradition. Made up of 20 skilled vocalists, the Chamber Chorale sings annually at the church's Christmas Concert, in addition to other special services throughout the year. The ensemble has premiered commissioned compositions by Sofia Gioldasi and Stephen Mager.

VESPER BELLS

The adult handbell choir of the church, the Vesper Bells is an auditioned ensemble of thirteen players who ring two five-octave sets of Schulmerich handbells and a three-octave set of Suzuki choir chimes. They ring regularly for worship and community events and are featured annually on the church's Christmas Concert and Good Friday Tenebrae service.

JUSTICE CHOIR OF THE MIDWEST

Inspired by a movement of similarly themed choirs across the country, the Justice Choir of the Midwest is a community ensemble of adult singers from across the Quad Cities region with a focus on racial justice, migrant justice, LGBTQ+ equality, climate justice, voting rights, and other areas of justice that are threatened by people in power. This ensemble partners with and raises funds for community organizations, shows up at protests, and provides a safe space for people to lift their voices in advocacy for the oppressed and for the planet.

QUAD CITY YOUTH CHOIR

A new project for First Pres, the Quad Cities Youth Choir is a community choral ensemble for students in grades 6-12 from across the Quad Cities metro. This ensemble launched in fall 2024 and focuses on vocal production, ensemble singing, and community building through singing a wide variety of sacred and secular repertoire.

KIRKWOOD CHOIR

All children in first through fifth grade are invited to sing in the Kirkwood Choir, which provides music for worship throughout the program year. This engaging and educational children's choir teaches our youngest singers score reading, part singing, and vocal production in a warm, welcoming enviornment where all kids are given the opportunity to shine.

MUSIKGARTEN

Contact
Kathy Middleton
Assistant Choral Director for Young Children
middleton@fpcdavenport.org

Musikgarten is a licensed music ministry curriculum for infants, babies, and toddlers with their parents, grandparents, or significant adults. Musikgarten utilizes sacred music to involve the whole child - the child's desire for language, the body's urge to move, the brain's attention to patterns, the ear's lead in initiating communication, and the voice's response to sounds. The group meets on Sunday morning. The sacred-based, highly-acclaimed curriculum, "God, My Family, and Me!" is the basis for this exciting ministry. FPC continues to be a leader in music ministry by being one of the first churches in the nation to add this outstanding sacred curriculum offering for its youngest children of God.

Musikgarten's philosophy is steeped in this understanding: movement and music activities are perfect for child development. Music immerses the child in language, evokes movement, stimulates the brain, and fosters physical coordination - all in a group setting that builds a faith-centered musical community - a truly holistic experience. Parents, grandparents, and significant adults sing, dance, and play with their children. Classes are a musical experience designed to bring the joy of music to caregiver and child. Activities include songs, movement, focused listening, and the use of simple instruments. Each class features bouncing and rocking songs, wiggle and peek-a-boo games, and other fun age-specific activities.





SUPPORT
THE PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

Subscriptions and contributions make it possible for First Pres to enjoy major musical productions and host world-renowned artists. We are excited to continue the Performing Arts Series tradition and further our church's history of providing the highest level of artistic vibrancy.

We hope you will consider supporting the music ministries at First Pres by subscribing or being a Benefactor Patron. Contributions can be made by mail or online at FPCDavenport.org/PAS.

Follow:
@MusicAtFirstPres

Matt Bishop | Director of Music & Arts

Alex Gilson | Assistant Director of Music/Principal Organist

Kathy Middleton | Assistant Choral Director for Young Children

First Presbyterian Church
Davenport, Iowa

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SERIES TICKET PACKAGE (discounted)
$50 adult | $30 student (discount only applies when purchased by September 30)