



NEWS

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GCC & COMMUNITY CHORUS PRESENT ANNUAL HOLIDAY CONCERT

Deptford Twp. – The 65-voice Gloucester County College and Community Chorus will present Johann Sebastian Bach’s Cantata 140, “Wachet auf (Wake, Awake)” followed by familiar holiday music during its annual holiday concert on Sunday, December 6, at 3 p.m. in the GCC Fine Arts Center. A second performance will be held on Tuesday, December 8, at 7:30 p.m. within a service of Evening Prayer at St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church in Woodbury.

Conductor Lawrence De Pasquale will direct the 30-minute cantata from the Gospel of St. Matthew based on the parable of the 10 virgins waiting the arrival of the bridegroom. Composed in 1731, Cantata 140 is one of Bach’s most famous works.

The concert will open with Carolyn Jennings’ work “Climb to the Top of the Highest Mountain.” Jennings is former dean of the School of Performing Arts at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. Performed with chorus and orchestra, the text is adapted from Isaiah 40. Continuing with the cantata, Bach features chorus, individual vocalists and a chamber orchestra, with Rowan University music professor Bertram Greenspan as concertmaster for these performances. Other orchestra members are professional musicians from the Philadelphia and South Jersey area. Soloists in the cantata are tenor Frank Broadbent of Turnersville, bass Bela Debrecenio of Wenonah, and soprano Dawn Baker Hoffman of Pitman. The duet arias sung concurrently by the bass and soprano musically personify the unity established between Christ and those who accept his promises solely on faith, and signifying that faith by maintaining watch through each day and night, always having sufficient oil in their lamps to meet him at his coming, should it be during the night hours. The coming of the Messiah at night speaks to diminish fear of the darkness, for the darkness of the earth is necessary for a seed to sprout to new life; the

darkness of the womb is necessary for the birth of a new life; the darkness of the grave is necessary for resurrection to new life.

The second half of the December 6 concert features the traditional Spanish carol “Hacia Belen va un borrico” (A Donkey Goes to Bethlehem) featuring tenor Cody Miller of Williamstown and Sue Straub of Sicklerville. The concert continues with “You’re A Mean One, Mister Grinch,” “When Christmas Comes to Town” from the movie *Polar Express*, and “Somewhere in My Memory” from *Home Alone*. The chorus is accompanied by pianist David Anderson.

Tickets for the December 6 choral concert are \$5 per person and can be purchased in the College Center or by calling (856) 415-2139. Proceeds will benefit the John V. Chard Memorial Scholarship Fund, a choral scholarship which is given to selected applicants who are pursuing studies in higher education either at GCC or elsewhere in the locale. The December 8 performance will be a freewill offering with half of the money raised donated to the John V. Chard Memorial Scholarship and half to St. Stephen’s Church.

This program is made possible in part from funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts from a grant to the Gloucester County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Gloucester County Cultural and Heritage Commission.

GCC’s 250-acre campus is located on Tanyard Road in Deptford, just off Exit 56 of Route 55. There is free parking a short walk from the Fine Arts Center.