

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church
49 Knox Drive
Lafayette CA 94549

August 18, 2008

Dear Singers,

As I unveil the exciting plans for this year, let me begin by expressing a deep and sincere appreciation for your participation. With all the demands on your time, choosing to make room in your life to sing at LOPC is a wonderful affirmation of the power of choral music. What beauty and mystery choirs can embody, guided by the Holy Spirit, helping the singer and the listener to ponder that which is beyond words – the unchanging love of God; grace that surpasses all we know. Please allow me to thank you on behalf of the whole congregation for your important role in this ministry. The year ahead includes many choral activities featuring inspiring classic and innovative choral repertoire spanning the centuries. Online (<http://www.lopc.org/getinvolved2.asp>) are complete schedules and repertoire overviews for **Festival Choir**, **Chancel Choir**, and **Gospel Choir**. The Festival and Chancel Choirs sing traditional choral literature, and the Gospel Choir explores more contemporary idioms.

Festival Choir is an excellent entry point for experienced singers because it is organized into three independent 4-6 week Sessions, and **childcare is available**. This fall, Festival Choir prepares for our **Christmas Concert, "Upon a Luminous Night," December 7 at 4:00 and 7:00 p.m.** featuring exuberant and ethereal choral-orchestral masterworks: *Ave Rex* by William Mathias, *A Christmas Garland* by Conrad Susa, and *How Far is it to Bethlehem* by Stephen Paulus. Mathias' work will be the centerpiece: it's vibrant yet lyrical choral writing is juxtaposed against accompaniment that moves between chromatic flurries and thunderous chords, and will surely capture the imagination of all generations.

Chancel Choir, another wonderful entry point into our ministry, is structured like most church choir programs. Smaller in size than Festival Choir (~35 singers), we prepare music for worship two Sundays each month. Chancel is the foundation for Festival Choir, and provides a particularly warm and musically invigorating environment for those seeking a more intentional sense of community, and more regular musical activity (including development of vocal technique and musicianship). This fall, Chancel will participate in the **Mont La Salle Church Choir Festival in Napa, October 25, 9am-3pm**: each choir will sing 2-3 pieces for each other and receive a clinic from a special guest conductor. A wine and cheese reception concludes the event.

Finally, I wish to highlight **Gospel Choir**, which will participate in the **September 27, 7:30 p.m Farewell concert for Greg Murai** (founder and out-going director), and will welcome a new director, Michelle Hawkins, who takes the reins beginning October 12. (See online schedule). New this year: Gospel Choir will rehearse every Sunday between the services, and will sing nearly every month. Music reading skills are not required.

I look forward to another year of activities enriched by dedicated singers and wonderful repertoire. Questions? Please contact me (Julie@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 ext. 224) for more information or discussion about how you might get involved. You can also visit our website, www.lopc.org/music to listen to sound clips of these and other LOPC ensembles, and to browse for much more details about our ministry.

Blessings,

Dr. Julie A. Ford
Director of Music and Worship