

Dear Parish Family,  
Glory to God!

As I close out my first full year of being blessed to direct the choir in our wonderful church, I wanted to share some highlights from 2023.

We have gained 4 additional choir members and 3 additional readers in the past calendar year.

The choir held 23 rehearsals throughout the year. 2 per month during the regular church calendar, weekly and occasionally twice weekly during Great Lent to prepare for Pascha, as well as during Advent. This past year, during Holy Week and Pascha, I am pleased to announce that we were able to showcase our many talented singers and readers throughout the week. The choir and readers worked exceptionally hard to perfect their readings and incorporate special sung pieces to add to the services. We were able to have 3 of our young ladies from church participate in Paschal Liturgy by reading the verses during the Small Entrance, and the choir was also able to ensure that our repertoire for the Paschal Troparia included the many languages fluently spoken in our church. During August we held a readers and singer's workshop with several of our directors heading different workshop stations. The workshop had a great turn out with over 30 in attendance including those who were not currently readers/singers as well as over a dozen children.

A Christ the Savior Choir playlist was created on YouTube. This playlist contains music that our choir sings during services, as well as many of those pieces broken down in each musical section so that choir members can easily access new or more advanced pieces and hear their specific voice part for practice. With Father John's patience, I submitted quite many new music pieces for approval to sing at Christ the Savior. With this commitment to rehearsal and increased ability to practice at home, the choir learned over 20 new pieces of music for Divine Liturgy! This does not include additional Holy Day pieces or new things for Great Lent or Pascha. Not only did they commit to learning these new pieces, but our choir has also worked to perfect the music we were already singing and has made great strides. We have focused on dynamics, tonality, and quality to truly serve our parish in worship during services.

In 2023, the choir sang for the following number of services:

- 71 Divine Liturgy
- 76 Vespers
- 9 Akathists
- 9 Matins
- 5 Memorial
- 5 Canon of St Andrew
- 6 Presanctified Liturgy
- 2 Vespers Divine Liturgy
- 1 Holy Unction
- Nocturne, Paschal Matins and Paschal Divine Liturgy
- 1 Wedding
- 1 Funeral

In addition to these things, as the choir director, I have kept up with scheduling rehearsals, choir and reader email list communications, working with those interested individually to meet their goals, each week, I prepare all of the Vespers and Liturgy books to be sure they have the correct Liturgical material for the following week or any special Holy Days and prepare choir lists in advance so everyone knows which page to turn to on Sundays. On average, I spend about 2-5 hours per week at home outside of rehearsals and services working on choir related material, this increases during preparatory seasons. We have combined and updated our choir books, especially for special services, so that there is less page turning and book switching, and the pages are in service order. I have also taken an additional 8 hours of lessons for directors/conductors above the basic directing course the OCA offers to gain more skills as a director.

I am ever grateful for the support and guidance of Fr John, the dedication and kindness our choir has shown me, the willingness of my fellow directors to assist when I am unable to serve, as well as all of the kind words and sentiments expressed to me by so many in the church. I will continue to do my best to serve our choir, our parish and to ensure all things are for the glory of God. Thank you all!

Love,  
Alexis O. DeArmitt