



July 2025

Dear Parents:

We are about to begin our thirteenth exciting year with the youth choir program here at Saint Bede. Parish records indicate you have a child eligible to join one of our choirs. Youth in grades 2 through 12 are encouraged to participate. The Saint Bede Youth Choir is an affiliate member of the American Federation Pueri Cantores, the officially recognized organization of youth choirs within the Catholic Church.

Our introductory choir is the **Young Choristers** under the direction of Maureen Haley. They will sing approximately every other Sunday at the 11am Mass **beginning September 14**. In this choir, the youngest members are introduced to group singing, basic musical concepts, and formation in the liturgy through the sung prayers and music of the Mass. Rehearsals involve a variety of activities and methods to meet the needs of the younger child. Students should be able to read at least 60% of texts in the hymns used on Sundays. This may be challenging for some of our youngest singers. If you have any concerns about your child's reading ability, please reach out to our office prior to August 14 at youthchoir@bedeva.org and Ms. Haley will contact you.

The older choirs include the **Junior Choristers** and the **Senior Choristers**. These choirs continue to build on the lessons of the prior years while increasing our choristers' music reading proficiency and leadership abilities. The educational model of these choirs is the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM). During the year, youth progress through both at-home online exercises and in class workbook pages to prepare them for a written and aural exam at the end of the year. Upon successfully passing, they earn the next color ribbon of the RSCM program. Both myself and Associate Director of Music, Laurel Eckenrode, will lead these choirs. The combined Junior Choristers and Senior Choristers will sing approximately every other Sunday at the 11am Mass **beginning September 7** as well as special liturgies including Advent Lessons and Carols and the annual First Communion Mass.

The exact division of students into each choir is roughly based on age, RSCM level, and the need to balance the total number of students in each of our three youth choirs. The specific choir assignment is finalized soon after the first rehearsal.

Rehearsals for all choristers will be in the church **beginning Tuesday, August 26**. The Junior and Senior Choristers will meet from 5:00pm to 6:15pm. The Young Choristers will meet from 5:15pm to 6:15pm.

New this year, our youth **Senior Ringers** handbell choir will be combined with our Saint Dunstan adult handbell choir to play at the 11am Masses with our Junior and Senior Choristers. This group is open to students 7th grade and older. Rehearsals for the combined Senior Ringers/Saint Dunstan Ringers will be on Tuesdays from 6:15pm-7:15pm.

5th and 6th grade students are eligible to participate in the **Junior Chimers**. Rehearsals for the Junior Chimers will be on Tuesdays from 6:15pm-6:45pm and this group will periodically play at the 11am Mass with our Junior and Senior Choristers.

Last year's handbell/chime ringers are automatically eligible to ring. For those students new to handbells/chimes, information regarding audition times will be sent later to those requesting an audition on our registration form.

On **Thursday, August 21 at 5pm-6pm** we ask all Youth Choir members and at least one parent to attend the uniform fitting and parent information meeting in Kaplan Parish Hall. Ice cream will be available for the choir members.

To enroll your child in the Saint Bede Youth Choir, visit <https://bedeva.org/youth-choir-registration> or use the QR code to access the registration form. **Please register and submit fees by Monday, August 18.** Register soon to secure a place for your child. Last year we reached capacity and had to place several youth on a waiting list. If your child was enrolled in last year's Youth Choir, you must re-enroll for this year's choir.



If your high school student is interested in the music ministry but does not wish to participate in the Youth Choir, they may consider joining our adult Saint Cecilia Choir, which meets every **Thursday from 6pm to 7:30pm beginning August 28**, and sings most Sundays at the 8:30am Mass **beginning September 7**. They are also welcome to join our principal handbell ensemble, the Saint Dunstan Ringers, which meets every **Tuesday from 6:15pm to 7:15pm starting August 26**, and plays approximately every other Sunday at the 11:00am Mass, **beginning September 7**. If they play a musical instrument in high school, reach out to us as well.

Please contact me at arenninger@bedeva.org for more information or questions about any of the choirs mentioned in this letter, or any other aspect of our diverse music program here at Saint Bede. See this link for the full list of musical opportunities in the parish- <https://www.bedeva.org/ensembles>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aaron Renninger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Aaron" and last name "Renninger" clearly distinguishable.

Aaron Renninger, Director
Office of Liturgy and Music
Phone 757-229-7723 www.bedeva.org