



THE GENEVANS
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BACKGROUNDER

January 30, 2026
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ABOUT THE GENEVANS CHOIR

(See the choir's accompanying news release for information about its Spring 2026 tour destinations.)

The Genevans choir exists to glorify God and minister to people through the gift of music. Formed in 1938, the choir continues a rich heritage of choral singing dating from the founding of Geneva College. While engaging audiences with important spiritual truth, The Genevans have acquired a reputation for choral excellence, musical variety and emotional impact.

While their repertoire is broad and varied, The Genevans specialize in the tradition of *a cappella* psalm-singing inherited from Geneva College's founding denomination, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. This worship practice encourages a deep appreciation for the musicality and spirituality of the Psalms. Each year The Genevans honor this tradition with their opening processional from Psalm 96, and by commissioning and performing settings of the Psalms throughout their programs.

Music has always played a significant role in the life of Geneva College. As early as the 1870's, men's and women's vocal ensembles directed by part-time instructors performed on the campus and on tours. In the 1930's these "Glee Clubs," as they were called, began to present joint concerts under the name "The Genevans." The merge became official in 1938, when the men's and women's groups united to form a mixed-voice choir under that name. Since then, The Genevans' musical reputation has grown under the leadership of directors Alfred H. Johnson (1949-1954), Harold W. Greig (1954-1979), Robert M. Copeland (1981-2012), and David Kenneth Smith (2012-present).

In 1986 The Genevans' music ministry became an international endeavor as they toured Ireland, Scotland, England, Switzerland, and France. During ten subsequent international tours they have revisited several of these places along with Germany, Poland, Italy, and Cyprus. In 2014, The Genevans performed in 17 venues throughout the Philippines and Malaysia over the course of three weeks. During the choir's international tour in May 2018, The Genevans appeared in venues across Northern Ireland, Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic. The choir toured in May 2022 to Israel and Ireland.

The Genevans have performed in Royal Albert Hall in London with the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra, Westminster Abbey, the Church of the Madeleine in Paris, the Thomaskirche and Nikolaikirche in Leipzig, Luther's Schlosskirche in Wittenberg, the

Schumann Haus in Zwickau, St. Nicholas Church (Staré Město) in Prague, the Franziskanerkirche and Salzburg Dom in Austria, the Friedenskirche in Potsdam, Duc in Altum Boat Chapel in Magdala, Israel, Christ Church in Jerusalem, Israel, St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh, the Abbey at Iona, Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin, The Guildhall in Londonderry, St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Kraków, the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Heinz Chapel in Pittsburgh, Union Church in Manila, and All Saints Cathedral in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysian Borneo. Twice they have represented the United States in the "Mai Lyon" Festival in Lyon, France.

The Genevans membership is offered to students at Geneva College by audition during the first week of classes each Fall. Their roster ranges from 53 to 76 members, though on recent annual March tours to Florida and Michigan, and to venues between Pennsylvania, Colorado, Massachusetts and Texas, the choir has traveled with 50 to 63 voices. A local western Pennsylvania - eastern Ohio tour in May 2021 featured its smallest performing group of 28 voices in their *How can we Sing the Lord's Song?* program.

The classical-sacred sound of The Genevans is heard on several radio stations in western Pennsylvania, particularly after their annual Christmas concerts at the First Presbyterian Church of Beaver Falls. The choir has also released recordings of sacred and secular music periodically since 1948, including their newest Christmas CD, *Magnify the Lord*, along with their Crown & Covenant-commissioned recordings of *Psalm of Zion*, *Psalm of Glory*, *Psalm of Ascent*, and *Psalm of Covenant*. Psalms from their latest recording project, on commission by the Trinity Psalter Hymnal, are available on all major streaming services ("Trinity Psalter Hymnal Album I"). These join the choir's distinguished *Psalm for the King* CD and Ephesians-themed *Walk as Children of Light*. From 2012 and before, other recordings available for purchase are *Call to Remembrance*, *On This Day, Sing me to Heaven*, and *The Genevans A Cappella*, performed under the baton of former director Robert M. Copeland. For more information about these recordings, as well as to find out more about The Genevans or to make donations to the choir's international music ministry, visit The Genevans online at <https://www.geneva.edu/genevans>.
