



For further information contact:

Tina Meckel
Executive Director
(612) 722-2301, ext. 105
tina@nlca.com
www.nlca.com

National Lutheran Choir Appoints New Artistic Director

Jennaya Robison to be the organization's third artistic leader in 37 years

MINNEAPOLIS, April 27, 2023 – The National Lutheran Choir today announced the appointment of Jennaya Robison, DMA, as its third artistic director in the organization's 37-year history. A highly accomplished choral conductor and educator, Robison will assume her role on July 1, 2023, succeeding David Cherwien, who is retiring after 21 years of service.

Robison holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in conducting from the University of Arizona at Tucson and directs the graduate program in choral conducting at the University of Missouri-Kansas City where she also leads the UMKC Conservatory Singers. Robison's undergraduate degrees were completed at Luther College and the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. Her extensive work in the field of choral conducting includes serving as associate professor of music at Luther College from 2013 to 2020 and founding Scottsdale Musical Arts in 2009.

In demand as a clinician and guest speaker, Robison frequently appears at regional and national choral conferences and seminars; she edits the Jennaya Robison Series with Pavane Music; regularly leads All State and honor choirs, workshops, and festivals; and serves as ACDA National Co-Chair for Student Activities. She has conducted or performed many major choral works in the classical canon and is an active arranger of choral music. Robison has sung with the Dale Warland Singers, True Concord Voices, Spire Chamber Ensemble, and the Tucson Symphony among many other ensembles. She is a member of the American Choral Directors Association and Chorus America.

Robison has also held leadership positions at Lutheran churches in Arizona, Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota. Regarding the National Lutheran Choir's mission to celebrate, invigorate and expand sacred choral music, Robison states, "Sacred music connects us to a higher purpose. And that purpose is to celebrate, unify, and proclaim the entirety of the human experience beyond what

we ourselves know. It's not limited by one faith tradition or idea of God; rather, it creates a space of belonging where every person is honored."

Robison's inaugural season with the National Lutheran Choir will be from September 2023 to April 2024 during which she will program, prepare, and conduct the All Saints concerts, Christmas Festival, lead a tour to North and South Carolina, and present late April concerts in the Twin Cities.

As a student, Robison was influenced by the narrative programming style of the National Lutheran Choir's founder Larry Fleming and states "My ideal concert program is one with musical and spoken transitions that include both music of the Western, choral canon as well as music that reflects a broader, global perspective. Thematic, narrative programming allows us to engage the listener in a way that connects our heritage with the present day. It also allows us to use our music for good in our community by connecting the history of our sacred texts and music with relevant issues of today."

NLC Board Chair Brenda Bartz states, "We are thrilled to welcome the talented and highly accomplished Dr. Robison to the National Lutheran Choir; the music she made with our singers in her audition performance suggests there is much to look forward to in our ongoing commitment to sharing the music of faith with excellence."

The appointment of Robison concludes a six-month search that attracted candidates from across the United States and abroad. The search was led by Zebulon Highben, DMA, of Duke University and a committee including leaders in the field of choral performance, church music, and higher education. Executive Director, Tina Meckel, remarked that "Jennaya is uniquely qualified to help NLC live into its values, which include choral excellence, the ongoing expression of the Lutheran choral tradition as a living and growing body of work, and welcoming new voices that lead us toward greater diversity, equity, and inclusion for all God's people."

About the National Lutheran Choir

The National Lutheran Choir's mission is to celebrate, invigorate, and expand sacred choral music, bringing inspiration and meaning to people of diverse faiths and backgrounds. Founded in 1986 by the late Dr. Larry Fleming, the National Lutheran Choir sings a spiritual story through diverse repertoire – from early chant and simple folk anthems to complex choral masterworks and new compositions. The National Lutheran Choir features a roster of 65 committed volunteer singers from various backgrounds and faith traditions. In addition to concertizing in the Twin Cities and on tour, the choir serves a national audience with a virtual subscription program featuring artfully produced digital content, concert live streams, and other releases. A discography of 35 recordings showcases the ensemble's music making over the years and features hymns, choral classics, contemporary works, spirituals, and major new works commissioned by the National Lutheran Choir. Much of this influential new work is featured in "The National Lutheran Choir Series," a collection of sheet music published by MorningStar Music. The National Lutheran Choir has been honored with the Wittenberg Award from the

Luther Institute, Chorus America's Margaret Hillis Award, and the Dale Warland Singers Commissioning Award. www.nlca.com

Note to editors: Photo available at <https://nlca.com/artistic-director-announcement>