

HOW TOUR INFLUENCED MY LIFE

It has left me with a lifetime of memories.

Shawnie (Anderson) Pierson

I learned that my faith runs deepest, and church is most meaningful when I am singing. Todd Vandembark

Life long friends and memories, appreciation for music, especially as a form of worship, and as a standard of fellowship and Christian community which I use today to measure the experiences offered to my children in their church experiences.

Kay (Cook) Kendall

Knowing how to have a great time with an organized group of people, especially when traveling. Ellen Mohr

I appreciate how people can work together as a family for a common goal to spread the word of God through music and to help others do the same.

Herb Bartron

Throughout high school, I was very fortunate to be exposed to John's passion for music, commitment to excellence and sense of humor. When I was in 7th grade John recommended me for the Grove Players' production of The Sound of Music. Looking back, I can see that it was a major turning point for me, one which I know contributed to my becoming a professional actor today.

Kevin McCoy

Meeting and falling in love with the man I'm never going to marry (but we are still together 15 years later).

Sara Armstrong

It helped prepare me for the work I do now as a theater musician. I was able to experience what it takes to work together with other people to put together a show.

Jeff Bell

Those experiences still live in my heart and give me comfort in difficult times. They also taught me how music can inspire and unite people. I have continued to participate in choirs and to experience the joy of singing with others.

Michael Shannon

It has taught me an appreciation for music and drama and shown me that young people can come together and create something meaningful and powerful for the glory of God.

Herb Schmutzler

Choir gave me a focus and a second home during my high school years. The sense of belonging and the experience of working together to produce something wonderful has stayed with me. I still feel happy when I remember it.

Sue McCowin

It has broadened my view of the liberal arts.

Michael Mohr

It gave me some long standing friendships!

Glenn Beggs

I think that traveling in the tour program allowed me to see parts of the states and give me confidence in meeting people. It led me to do things that I wouldn't have done otherwise.

Kristen Speta

I look for quality relationships and I love music with spirit!

Shari VanderVelde

I learned that just because we're a church choir, we are by no means exempt from the ugliness of life - the petty jealousies, power struggles and aches for significance. Christians can be as "bad" - or worse - as the rest of the world. We have to work and listen and grow and, amazingly, we can put together something wonderful.

Michael Swartwout

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In a strange way I think my choir experience has made me a more humble person. If there was one thing I learned, it was a sense of humility.

Richard Uphoff

Fellowship and singing is my "therapy" in life. I will always need it.

Sarah Sippy

That is where my dearest friends were!

Mariann Mahnke

It made me always remember what is important in life - friends, family and God.

David Swartwout

I regret that I only went on one tour because I still think of all the fun I had.

Robert Moore

I've always enjoyed singing and I joined a local choir while I lived in Besancon, France to perform concerts of period music throughout Central-Eastern France.

Robin (Beggs) Vi

It has made me realize that people are easy to trust.

Scott Marsch

For 5 years I was the Youth Choir Director at Catalina Methodist in Tucson. I constantly drew upon past tour songs for my choir.

Dave Neve

The importance of Christian fellowship and a Christian community. I pray I can give my children the opportunity of a similar experience.

Kim (Mochel) Yaglowski

I was in 3rd of 4th grade and I decided that I didn't want to be in choir anymore. My mother didn't push it, so I stopped going. A few weeks later she got a call from Mr. Neve because he had not seen me at rehearsal. My mother told me he had called and why, and I remember feeling that it was nice to be missed. It is sad to think of what I would have missed if he had not cared enough to make that phone call.

Robin (Reich) Galbreath

I met a lot of interesting people that I otherwise never would have met.

April Ludwig

I had the chance to sing in Carnegie Hall last May.

Kelly McCartney

I found that although my voice isn't solo quality, I can still praise God in song. John Neve did a wonderful job of teaching Biblical truths and reminding us to think about the words we were singing. My years in choir brought me closer to the Lord. I always look back with joy!

Debbie (Aumann) Hollensbe

Enriched my musical background and continued my love of singing and other forms of music. Stressed involvement in the church (we've been presidents of our Sunday School class and I'm currently President-Elect. of UMW at Custer Road UMC in Plano, TX.

Holly (Beggs) Atwood

In the crazy teenage years, it gave me a basis for my morals to live by for the rest of my life, and kept me out of trouble!

Lea Anne(Botsford) Crosier

It is always a warm, happy time in my life that I always think back on and smile. It also, unfortunately, makes it that I cannot sing a church song without tearing up. It was wonderful!

Deanna (Bowen) Ward

If you work hard you can accomplish more than you ever thought and to cherish your friends because they're always there for you.

Stacy Yenerich

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I went into the ordained ministry in the UMC and have been very active in youth/children's ministries and active in music ministries. Linda Burson

It taught me the importance of hard work, dedication, patience, faith and friendship. Mark Flory

I believe my greatest connections with God were begun in/through our music - probably what eventually lead me to seminary and Diaconal ministry. Denise (Bowen) Hage

I learned that the world is full of opportunities, challenges and experiences. Mark Priest

Having the experience to perform Christian music throughout the different churches across the country, meeting people along the way of all walks of life, and being able to bond in fellowship with friends. To this day I haven't found a church that shares the same excitement in music as the FUMC did/does. Tracy (Cale) Gramm

Sharing with others the wonders of God and Jesus through our shows always brought a warm feeling to my heart that reminds me to daily thank God for his presence in my life and others. Pam Pickett

It probably made me a little more adventuresome in college, trying new things. When I got back from college I decided to join the Chancel Choir because I enjoyed H.S. choir so much. Carolyn (Colby) Donnelly

The love and appreciation for young people and their many wonderful gifts was a personal gift I will always cherish. Choir tours were highlights in my life experience. Jan Guthrie

I made many friendships with members of the choir(s). A "special" closeness seemed to develop each year among members of the tour choirs. I enjoyed the chance to travel to different parts of the country. Kevin Bute

Having moved away a few months after tour, I learned that good friends and the fellowship I knew in Downers Grove could never be duplicated. I miss it very much! Elaine (Frazier) Hammons

Provided a start to a lifetime of service and membership in the Methodist Church. Carl Niemann

It helped me not to be afraid of performing or speaking in front of people. Linda (Bute) Vinson

I don't think I have ever been or ever will be closer to a group of people. Becky Reed

It was a comfort to know that wherever I go I can find a welcoming church family. Randi (Olson) Topps

I enjoy singing and am not embarrassed! Sandi (Isenberger) Murray

I enjoyed spreading the good news of our lord Jesus Christ through the music we did and the communion on the last night of tour. Gwen Clore

I am now encouraging my children to be a part of the children's choir/programs at our church. Debbie (Bush) Bradbury

Was this the beginning stage of the travel bug I have? Elizabeth Conner

Tour influenced my life in a positive way. It provided me a place to go each week, to work with others putting a show together, and then the thrill of succeeding as a group of successful young people. It also helped me to not be afraid to talk and get to know people. Kent Ebersold

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Before coming to choir I had never attended church. The opportunity to perform with (and ultimately sing with) the choir that was provided to me by John Neve and Al Roselieb opened a door to a faith that I have nurtured for the past 20 years. While I haven't always been good at putting that faith into action, the choir was certainly the seed upon which my faith has grown. Claib Cook

Learned that people have such different lives outside of one common base. Laura Doerr

Well, I haven't become a professional singer or performer, but I have a lot of fond memories! Donna (Ebersold) Fletcher

I didn't realize at the time just how unusual our opportunities/experiences through church & UMYF were. Church was where: my closest friendships grew; my faith was nurtured; we developed leadership, organizational and self-responsibility skills; we had a chance to be a part of something exciting and challenging; our fragile adolescent self-esteem found shelter and acceptance. We learned about: getting along with others; feeding the multitudes (planning meals for a retreat or lock-in); minimalist packing; and all the good things teens need to grow into capable young adults! Nancy (Cramer) Trehey

It has made me more confident, sincere, and open. They asked me to sing at Super Bowl '97 after having this experience (but I'm busy that weekend). Tracy Ehrlich

Choir was one of the first non-school opportunities to work as a team, learning those preparation and implementation lessons that only hard work and dedication can yield was priceless. Melinda Bergstrom

It got me involved actively in the church. I've found myself very active again in everything from Sunday School to handbell choir. I believe this stems from my earlier involvement growing up. Nancy (Ebersold) Bifulco

The music in a church service is always a very special part of the worship experience for me. Also, just in my day to day life activities, I find myself singing or humming songs from tour. Lisa (Wells) Small

I married someone 10 years after I met him in choir! Kay (Kresl) Vandembark

Church choir provided for me a very strong foundation of friendships and support which remains with me even today. Janet Flewelling

I made wonderful friendships that still exist today. I am definitely more spiritual because of my choir years. Also, I have a great appreciation for the FUMC and what it has offered me over the past 9 years. Diana (Moore) Neilson

I cannot begin to adequately express the multitude of ways choir and UMYF has influenced my life in a positive way. Being involved in choir gave me the opportunity to grow closer to God and the chance to share that faith with others. It also pointed me toward a lifetime of singing (with other barbershop singers). In 1987, my barbershop chorus was international chorus champion, an experience I will cherish for the rest of my life as well. Russ Fletcher

I am now able to throw a toilet paper roll farther and higher than anyone I know! I still maintain friendships with a number of people from choir. They are still some of the best people I know! Scott Jable

The choir influenced my (our) life that I became a part of their lives, especially on tour. Their families became important to me as well. I watched these young people grow up into young adults, and then adults with their own families. Through yearly correspondence many are still a part of our lives. Jane Neve
I'm more inclined to join large choir groups and get the most out of them. Erin Ellis

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The closeness that came from the experiences, the moral guidance at a time of rebellion, the energy that came from the performances! Allison Kroeger

Given me valuable memories, especially to share with my children. Taught me friendship and how to appreciate people and music. Bonnie (Johnson) Hall

It has taught me how to work and cooperate with others, to be caring and giving! Polly Needham

Greater ability to communicate with others David Lockhart

DIRECTORS OF TOUR CHOIR

Lois Lawrence

John Neve

David Gladstone

Vickie Chapman

Thanks For the 25 Great Years of Memories!

A Special Thanks

Celebrate Tour - 25 Years of Memories would not have taken place without the help and effort of far too many people to mention. These people spent countless hours of inputting data for mailings and this directory, attending meetings for planning and coordinating the events of the weekend. Thanks to Vickie Chapman for her leadership, and all the people who made an extra effort to be a part of this very special time. Tour Choir was a very significant part of each and every one of our lives. It truly should be celebrated with nothing but great memories, and our continued support so that the tradition of Choir Tour at The First United Methodist Church of Downers Grove, Illinois may be carried on for generations to come.