

2026 FACULTY

Heather Potter

Heather is an experienced children's choir director and educator, with a long career dedicated to teaching young singers and mentoring choir leaders. Until 2025, she was director of traditional music at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC, and previously served as artistic director of the Charlotte Children's Choir. She has taught music at all levels, and led workshops and festivals nationwide. published resources for children's choirs, including her curriculum, A Year of Beautiful Singing.

Dr. Potter is a past-president of Choristers Guild and has held leadership roles with ACDA.

Vincent Oakes

Vic is an accomplished choral conductor and educator, serving as artistic director of the Chattanooga Boys Choir for over twenty years, and as director of choral music at The Baylor School since 2006.

A leader in the American Choral Directors Association, Vincent has served as president of both the Tennessee chapter and the Southern Region, and participated in the inaugural ACDA International Conductor Exchange in Cuba.

Katie Houts, Choristers Guild Sacred Choral & Curriculum Editor

Katie curates and edits a wide range of sacred music resources. She is also an accomplished composer, accompanist, and clinician, and serves on the ACDA National Committee for Composition Initiatives as its national chair.

Based in Salt Lake City, Katie leads multiple choral ensembles, including Rise Up Children's Choir, and teaches music at Wasatch Charter School.

Emily Floyd, Co-Director

Emily is associate pastor for music and worship at First Baptist Church of Asheville, NC. Emily has served in Presbyterian and Methodist churches and has taught high school choral music in public schools. She is president of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians and is a respected clinician.

Karol Kimmell, Co-Director

Karol served as choir director and pre-school music teacher in Lutheran, Episcopal, and Presbyterian congregations and schools. Her articles, anthem studies, and hymn arrangements appear in The Chorister and Augsburg Fortress' Sundays and Seasons and Prelude. Karol is a frequent clinician across many denominations in children's ministries. Karol has co-directed Lutheridge Music Week, planning the week's innovative worship, and serves as the choral clinician for PreK-2nd grade.

James Wells, Choristers Guild Institute Host
James is the director of worship and arts at Brentwood United Methodist Church near Nashville, Tennessee, where he has led music ministries and directed choirs for all ages for over 27 years. He also serves as the artistic director of the Nashville Children's Choir at Belmont University, nurturing young voices from grades 3-12.



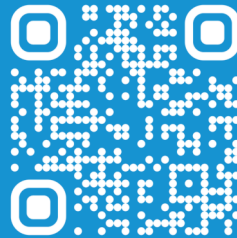
469-398-3606
12404 Park Central Dr Ste 100-S Dallas, TX 75251
www.choristersguild.org

Conference Site
Brentwood UMC
309 Franklin Rd
Brentwood, TN 37027

Conference Hotel
Comfort Inn & Suites
111 Penn Warren Dr
Brentwood, TN 37027

REGISTER TODAY

[CHORISTERSGUILD.ORG/CGI](https://choristersguild.org/cgi)



If you have questions about the Institute, contact us at institute@choristersguild.org

FOLLOW US

 [Choristers Guild Institute](#)

 [Choristers Guild](#)

 [choristersguild](#)

 [Choristers Guild](#)



choristersguild

Institute

Connect, Grow, Inspire

July 13-16, 2026
Brentwood, TN
(Near Nashville)





The training process is designed to strengthen directors' musical and instructional skills to equip them to effectively integrate children in worship. Graduates become part of a close and supportive nationwide network of Institute alumni.

Core Classes

- Choral Methods
- Pedagogy
- Conducting (Beginning-Advanced Levels)

Special Topics

- Recruiting and Retention
- Visuals for Teaching
- Alexander Technique
- Solfège
- Rules of Music
- Seasons of the Church Year
- Hymnody with Children
- Classroom Management
- Teaching Children to React to Conducting Gestures
- The Changing Voice

Repertoire

- Reading Sessions
- Repertoire-Based Classes

Worship

Experience daily worship services with children and youth in mind, using creative ideas for child/youth-led worship, including, yet moving beyond the anthem.

“Choristers Guild Institute is so much more than a music conference. Along with music-focused classes like vocal pedagogy and conducting, participants explore the other key pieces of a vibrant music ministry – worship and rehearsal planning, effective leadership, program-building, and more. Whether you’re a volunteer director or someone with an advanced degree, everyone finds a warm welcome at the Choristers Guild Institute.

We return to our unique ministries feeling called, capable, and connected to a community of lifelong Choristers Guild Institute friends.”

Katie Houts
Choristers Guild Sacred Choral and Curriculum Editor

“My time at the Choristers Guild Institute has transformed the way I direct children’s and youth choirs. I know of no other program that explores pedagogy, choral methods, conducting, voice, and worship in such a practical and insightful way. The faculty is top-notch in each of their areas, and they care about making each student better teachers and leaders in their ministry settings.”

Choristers Guild Institute Year Three Participant

“I came back on fire with ideas and empowered with tools that I can use to make my choir rehearsals so much better.”

Choristers Guild Institute Year Two Participant

“The Choristers Guild Institute is a transformative and uplifting program for children’s choir leaders. Whether you are a beginning children’s choir director or quite advanced, the Choristers Guild Institute provides education, spiritual nourishment, and fellowship for you.”

Choristers Guild Institute Participant

Ideas and skills you will take home from the Institute:

- Creative, purposeful integration of children into worship through song, spoken word, prayer, and movement
- Choosing appropriate anthems
- Plan engaging and effective rehearsals
- Fine-tune conducting skills
- Ways to develop a beautiful choral tone
- Strategies for effective recruitment and retention
- Gentle, effective approach for challenging behaviors
- Awareness of vocal modeling
- Props and visual aids for teaching
- Songs and activities for marking seasons of the church year
- Working effectively with volunteers and colleagues
- Teaching music literacy: note and rhythmic training
- Establishing traditions and milestones in your choir program
- Reinforcing organizational skills for planning
- Developing and communicating a vision for your children’s music program

Connections made during the Choristers Guild Institute prove invaluable to participants. You’ll make friends across the country - colleagues - who can answer your questions, share advice, suggest repertoire, understand your disappointments, and rejoice in your successes.

Our youth and children’s choirs are the beneficiaries of this wonderful continuing education program. Join us!