

New Bedford's Spirit of Saint Anthony Choir Christmas concert and sing along returns

"At this exciting time of year, the Spirit of Saint Anthony Choir is together again, after a COVID hiatus.

On Sunday, December 18, 2022, at 3:00 pm, the 45-voice choir will be performing a Christmas Concert including their traditional sing along and Hallelujah Chorus. Everyone is welcome to come out to Saint Anthony of Padua Church, at 1359 Acushnet Avenue in New Bedford and sing along.

Bring your family and friends and enjoy complimentary refreshments following the concert in the church hall. For this event, free parking and shuttle service is provided by Tremblay Bus from the St. Killian's parking lot on Earle St, between Ashley Blvd and Acushnet Ave. A suggested donation of \$10 will be accepted at the door.

The Spirit of St. Anthony Choir was formed and first performed in 2004 as the fundraising effort to restore the church's now 110-year-old historic pipe organ. Opus 489 was built specifically for the space by the Casavant Brothers company in Canada.

It is a French Romantic style pipe organ that has been in continual use by the church for its ministry and to provide musical events from time to time. Because the instrument is so old, some of the leather and wooden parts are worn, and need refurbishing. Music at Saint Anthony's holds both concerts and pipe organ recitals to raise funds for repairs and ongoing annual maintenance for the precious instrument.

David Touchette is the long time Choir's director and has a loyal membership that are inspired by the selections of music that he prepares for the performances. He is accompanied by Isleila Rodrigues on the keyboard, and local instrumentalists, Neil Sylvia on drums, and Wendy Hawes on the flute. Many of the songs are well known Christmas anthems. Coupled with the traditional singalong, ending with the Hallelujah Chorus, this concert is a well-loved family event that starts off the week of Christmas on a positive note.

Steven Young will be playing the pipe organ during the concert. His selections include Toccata on Helmsley by James Vivian, and Wachet auf by Aaron David Miller, and he will accompany the sing along. Guest soloists, featuring Kevin Gomes performing local composer Russ Campoli's song, "HOPE", plus three other local performers from Debra Perry's Vocal Development Studio, Joey Azevedo, Meghan Bernier, and Kailey Poitras who will be accompanied by Ruth Monty.

This year, a lovely Christmas pageant will be performed by the religious education students at 6 pm. Concert attendees are encouraged to remain in the church hall to enjoy the children's Christmas production."