



Gettysburg Civic Chorus brings the spirit of love to Gettysburg

December 14, 2025 by [Patti Restivo](#)

“Love Came Gently” to the Gettysburg community on the twelfth day before Christmas as the Gettysburg Civic Chorus presented its traditional streaming Christmas concert live at the Gettysburg Area Middle School.

On Saturday afternoon, the auditorium filled with enchanted friends and family who came to celebrate the spirit of the season with likely the longest-standing music group in historic Gettysburg. Almost a hundred singers and musicians filled the ample performance space with their talent and goodwill in a beautiful performance that has long been a local tradition.

Founded in 1962, the chorus has performed in countless church services and at notable civic and patriotic events — including for Mamie Eisenhower and Gettysburg’s American Freedom Train during the U.S. Bicentennial and at the re-dedication of the Eternal Light Peace Memorial (1988).

Recently, GCC has also been performing with the Hanover Symphony Orchestra at their annual Christmas concerts.

Usually directed by retired local music teacher and GCC Artistic Director Bill Serfass, this year’s concert was led by his close friend and fellow guitarist David Conklin, who stepped in when Serfass experienced some health challenges.

Serfass, who wrote this year’s edifying program, said it felt “really weird” to be in the audience this year, which is something he’s not used to.

“Our town is so full of talented people that when I can’t do something like this, and I’m supposed to, if you set the table, there are people who can fix it up for you... Dave is one of those guys ... I trust Dave implicitly,” he said.

Retired as the Director of Bands for the Gettysburg Area School District, Conklin is the Director of Music and the Adult Choir Director at Gettysburg Presbyterian Church, as well as the current Guest Director at GCC.

Accompanied by pianist Esther Redding (with Dan White on percussion, Roger Sine on bass guitar, Bennett Sheahan on Guitar and Carol Garman on keyboard), Conklin opened the concert with “It’s Beginning To Look Like Christmas” to swing into the holiday spirit.

A set of 17 carefully chosen and well-rehearsed carols by American and European composers carried the audience through a journey around the world from the present to Bethlehem and back again. Jessica Sheahan’s solo performance of “Love Came Gently,” written by Marty Funderburk of Nashville, highlighted the concert’s spiritual theme.

Dave Reinecker sang solo in the Austrian carol, “Still, Still, Still” — a traditional song that recreates the wonder of the first Christmas night — followed by “Come and See the Baby,” performed with light percussion accompaniment only, written by active composer Ruth Morris Gray of California.

“Wintertide,” composed by Ola Gjeilo with new lyrics by Charles Anthony Silvestri, preceded “Rockin’ Holidays!” — a medley of “When Santa Claus Gets Your Letter,” “A Holly Jolly Christmas,” and “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” — before pausing for Intermission.

The concert resumed equally strong with Graman and Redding performing on the four-hand piano with the choir in the pulsing “Fum, Fum, Fum.”

“While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks,” arranged by Paul Christiansen, and “Star of Wonder” drew goosebumps.

Vocal solos by Grace Toms (“Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind”) and Holly Fox (“Carols of the Night”) were also lovely, and the tongue-in-cheek “I Want to Stare at My Phone With You” made everyone smile

In the finale, Conklin and the choir embraced the audience in “A Bit of Holiday Cheer” — an array of popular favorites that ended with the audience joining in a sing-along of “Silent Night.”

It was difficult to look away from the festive ensemble of glowing faces garbed in red and black on Saturday afternoon, even though listening to them sing with eyes closed was mesmerizing. All in all, “Love Came Gently” felt like more than a concert, it felt like coming home to Christmas in Gettysburg.

In one particularly sweet moment early on, Conklin introduced 90-year-old Lefty Biser, the most veteran member of the choir, to warm applause.

Many folks attending on Saturday seemed to agree with Serfass that the town is full of talented people.

“We’ve been coming for years; I love this group,” said Lynn Dowling. “I know theater people and people I live with who are in it and I couldn’t disappoint them. This whole group never disappoints.”

Virginia Bell said, “I’m glad I came with many friends here and my out-of-town daughter; the voices are terrific, and the conductor is excellent. I’ve been looking forward to this all week.”

Karen Polomski came particularly to support members of the choir who live at the Links of Gettysburg.

“I knew they’d do a beautiful performance that would put me in the Christmas spirit. There were times I had shivers and times I had tears about to drop,” she said.