

Please Sing Along With Us With Heart-Warming Thoughts On Christmas Day

As faithful followers of the Foothills Ward Temple & Family History Facebook Group, *Merry Christmas* to each of you with special encouragement for your temple & family history endeavors. As the recently called choir president of the Foothills Ward, we had an interesting challenge perhaps no more challenging than overcoming our most difficult family history dilemmas, how does a ward choir perform for Christmas services when it is against the law to sing in public? Fortunately, we live in times where technology is abundantly available. Charles Dickens would be very proud of what our ward accomplished with these limitations. The choir met over Zoom and discussed it at length. I volunteered to put together a virtual choir in which all choir members were willing to make an individual video recording on their smartphones and submit it to me. I had two dear colleagues at MakeMusic (Mavis and Leigh Kallelstad) assist me in producing a master audio recording in *Finale* featuring the piano accompaniment with soprano, alto, tenor and bass parts which was sent to all section leaders in the choir and then their individual voices were recorded and added on the piano backing tracks. Which was then sent to all choir members to listen to on one device with earbuds, and they recorded their own part on their second device (tablet or smartphone). Once I received their individual recordings on my Google Drive account, I gave my son permission to download all the individual videos and insert them into a master video production that was reposted back to my Google Drive. Once assembled, I gave the master video to my local clergy with instructions to project it on a 15 X 15 screen in our chapel for use in our December 20th Christmas service worship meeting.

The irony in the State of Colorado is that we are now only barely allowed to attend church in severely restricted numbers because of the COVID pandemic, safe social-distancing and certainly not allow to sing in our church meetings at all, and yet the virtual choir presentation was accomplished with all these restrictions including no choir rehearsals. At the onset, our choir was represented below by wife as the conductor and me as the choir present in the photo below with me duplicated in various choir seats to illustrate our deep-seated frustrations of not being able to meet as a choir for an indefinite projected period of time.



The first virtual choir performance was the opening song of our December 20th worship service singing: *"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day."* While our numbers were not large, we indeed pulled off a "Super Bowl" event by contributing to our Christmas worship meeting when our clergy had absolutely no expectations when calling my wife as the choir director in early November. Most of the congregation was not even there but it was shared to all via a Zoom broadcast via videoconferencing technology. Hope you can enjoy our efforts on Christmas Day by singing along with us with your entire family with hymn number 214 with all five verses of *"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day."*



Click [here](#) to enjoy the epoch performance during a time when “live” musical activities have totally ceased in our daily lives. When will our next performance be because of the uncertainties of the COVID pandemic? We will do another Zoom meeting after the holidays and perhaps we can contribute to our 2021 Easter worship service? Say a prayer for us much like we all need to do whenever searching for our ancestors whose records and personal memories are not easily found. And yet with the technologies available, it is possible to accomplish an incredible amount of original family history research even during the coronavirus to achieve our “Impossible Dreams” at this sacred time of Christmas Celebration with a lay-congregation of choir volunteers.



Closing Comments

Never say never because if you pray and make sincere attempts to serve the Lord in your Church calling(s) along with your family history endeavors, life can be an exciting change of events for each and all of us as well as for our families. Keep these special blessings readily available and may God bless you at this challenging and awkward time, world-wide. We definitely need more music in our church services as well as in society in general. This shutdown is awkward at best.

[Merry Christmas to One and All With Music and Heart-Warming Thoughts](#)

Till next time,

John Kuzmich, Jr. Leader
Foothills Ward Temple & Family History

