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For Immediate Release

The Detroit-based Fort Street Chorale is pleased to announce new leadership for their fortieth production of Georg Friedrich Handel's *Messiah*.

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Chosen for his dynamic, energetic conducting and coaching style, the members of the Fort Street Chorale and Chamber Orchestra are excited to work with Dr. Michael A. Mitchell, who will lead and conduct the ensemble in their 2018 performances of Handel's *Messiah*, scheduled for December 1 and 2, at 3 PM at Fort Street Presbyterian Church.

Mitchell sang his first *Messiah* when he was fourteen years old with his father as the conductor. Reminiscing he remarked: "It was the first large choral work I ever performed, and it has a special place in my heart.

"I am thrilled to be part of the amazing tradition of the Fort Street Chorale. Their annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* is an important tradition in Detroit. I am honored to be the conductor for their fortieth anniversary performance. *Messiah* is an inspiring piece of art, and I look forward to rehearsing and performing it with this group of dedicated volunteers."

Mitchell is the Director of Choral Activities and the Doris and Paul Travis Professor of Music at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. His duties include direction of the university's three chorale ensembles, as well as the supervision of their graduate-level choral conducting program.



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Since 2005, Mitchell has also been a regular guest conductor of the Academic Choir Ivan Goran Kovacic in Zagreb, Croatia.

For nine concert seasons he served as the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Detroit-based Cantata Academy Chorale. During his tenure, he led the group on three acclaimed European tours and in multiple performances with the Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings.

Mitchell has conducted masses and full concerts at many of Europe's leading sacred music venues, including St. Mark's Basilica and Chiesa San Salvador in Venice, St. Nicholas Church in Prague, Peterskirche in Vienna, St. Matthias Church and St. Stephen's Basilica in Budapest, the Church of the Holy Redeemer in Bratislava, the Church of St. Jacob in Ljubljana, and St. Catherine's Church in Zagreb.

On the popular music front, Mitchell teaches a popular summer course on the history of Rock and Roll, and he has prepared and conducted choruses for the Rolling Stones and Sarah Brightman.

Before coming to Michigan, Mitchell taught at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and was a choral director and music supervisor in public schools in Texas. He studied conducting, music education, and voice at the University of Texas at Austin and received his doctorate in conducting from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory.

About Fort Street Chorale

Fort Street Chorale is a musically proficient ensemble of 60 voices founded in 1971 by Edward Kingins, who served as the group's music director until his 2016 retirement. The Chorale is a non-denominational, all-volunteer, non-auditioned ensemble.



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In addition to approaching their 40th production of Handel's *Messiah*, which has been regularly featured as the ensemble's December production, the group's annual spring productions feature full-length works of the classical chorale repertoire.

Past spring season productions have featured Mozart's *Requiem*, Dvorak's *Stabat Mater*, Handel's *Joshua*, Hayden's *Lord Nelson Mass*, Bach's *Mass in G Major*, and Brahms' *German Requiem*.

The ensemble's volunteer council relies on the inspiration of dynamic artistic management and leadership to inspire participants to achieve their highest artistic selves. The group's cultivation of fellowship and community encourages all participants participation in the successful implementation of their ticket sales and fundraising programs.

Thus, the group has regularly employed the Fort Street Chamber Orchestra, an ensemble comprised of professional musicians, led since 1998 by Concertmistress Sherri Marttila. Chorale members are also joined in performance by well-known professional soloists.

New vocal participants are regularly recruited and welcome to join the ensemble at the start of each season. Fort Street Chorale is a ministry of Fort Street Presbyterian Church.