



# Encounter Youth Choir welcomes new members in January

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ALTON – The Encounter youth choir is preparing for its 46<sup>th</sup> season in 2018 and is looking for high school students from the Riverbend area to join the ministry. An Encounter Mixer is coming up on Saturday January 6<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-10:30pm at the Main Street United Methodist Church in Alton where new and returning students can learn about the group, listen to some of the musical, meet current members and adult leaders and share a meal.

Encounter is a Christian ministry based at Main Street UMC but is open to any high school student. Last year, there were students from 30 churches and 7 local high schools. The group is dedicated to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ through the ministries of music, service, fellowship and participation in the life of the church. This

year, Encounter will present the musical *All That is Within Me* by Travis Cottrell in more than a dozen worship services starting Easter Sunday through early August.

Encounter rehearses every Sunday evening beginning January 7 and will then sing at churches in Alton, Godfrey, Jerseyville, Collinsville and Highland this spring and summer. The group will go on a week-long trip later this summer that includes service projects, performances, worship and sightseeing.

Head Sponsor Devon Neal says, “To me the powerful thing that Encounter offers is a welcoming environment for all students regardless of what their background is in church or their family life. The labels that society so easily place on all of us are stripped away and they're surrounded by people that love them, encourage them, and who want to help them come to know Christ who loves them unconditionally. It's a powerful Ministry! It's a lot of work but our retreat at the beginning of our season and tour at the end of the season combine so much fun that it makes all the hard work worthwhile.”

Choir director Eddie Hitchcock adds, “I can't wait for this new Encounter year to start. Anyone willing to sing is welcome to join Encounter. We're using our voices to share a story and through Christ nothing can separate us from the love of God.”

Students who are interested in joining Encounter can then return Sunday January 7 at 3pm, with their parents or guardians, to officially register and attend the first rehearsal later that evening. To learn more about Encounter, or the upcoming mixer, and to begin the pre-registration process, go to [www.encounteryouthchoir.org](http://www.encounteryouthchoir.org) or call Main Street at 462-2495. You can also follow Encounter Youth Choir on Facebook and Instagram.