



Encounter Youth Choir to begin 46th season on April 1

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ALTON - The Encounter Youth Choir begins its 46th season with two worship performances on Easter Sunday. A ministry of the Main Street United Methodist Church in Alton, Illinois, Encounter will perform "All That is Within Me" by Travis Cottrell in sixteen appearances in the Riverbend area this spring and summer. The first two events are on Sunday April 1 at 4:30pm and 7:00pm at Main Street UMC at 1400 Main Street in Alton.

Encounter is made up of about 85 high school students from seven area schools representing more than 30 Riverbend area churches. It also has 16 adult Sponsors who do much of the behind the scenes work from fundraising, leading small group scripture study, running sound, driving students, and more. Its mission is to spread the word of Jesus through music, service, fellowship and participation in the life of the church.

The 2018 season actually started in January with a mixer for returning and potential members, and the group practices each Sunday evening through Palm Sunday, then holds an all-day rehearsal on Good Friday. In addition to rehearsals each week, there is group worship time or small group Scripture study, and a dinner provided by parents.

In 1972, the choir director of Main Street UMC in Alton started a small choir made up of eleven youth from the church. They called themselves “Love Eleven.” The following year the membership grew to 36. That year, they prepared a musical entitled “The Encounter”, which ultimately became the official name for the group. The Methodist Annual Conference invited the group to perform that year. A Navy captain heard them sing at the conference and extended them an invitation to sing at the naval base in Orlando, Florida. Suddenly, the group was on its way to Florida, where they sang at the base before an audience of 1500 service men and women. As part of the tour, they performed at several churches along the route and in the Orlando area. As a result of this experience, Encounter has incorporated a week-long service and performance tour towards the end of every season. Some of the recent tour destinations have been Washington DC, Wisconsin Dells, Chicago, Estes Park, CO, Panama City Beach, Gatlinburg, St. Simons Island, GA, and this summer, the group will return to Estes Park for retreat, service work, performances and spending time in nature.

All Encounter performances at area churches are open to the public with a free will offering taken up during the show, otherwise there is no charge to attend. This summer the group will carry a large American Flag in the Memorial Day Parade in Upper Alton, sing a few songs at the Relay for Life Riverbend, and perform the full musical at Chautauqua as part of a Summer Concert Series.

For more information, visit www.encounteryouthchoir.org or follow the group on Facebook and Instagram. You can call the Main Street United Methodist Church in Alton for more information at 618-462-2495.

Encounter 2018 – Performance Schedule

Sun. April 1 – Main Street UMC – Alton - 4:30 and 7:00pm

Sun. April 8 – River of Life Church – Alton – 6pm

Sun. April 15 – Westminster Presbyterian - Godfrey – 6pm

Sun. April 22 – Word and Spirit Family Church - Godfrey – **6:30pm (Note later time)**

Sun. May 6 – Highland Hope UMC – Highland – 6pm

Sun. May 20 – Evangelical United Church of Christ – Godfrey – 6pm

Mon. May 28 – Walk in Memorial Day Parade – Alton

Sun. June 3 – Abundant Life Church – Alton – 6pm

Sun. June 10 – Collinsville First UMC – Collinsville – 6pm

Thur. June 14 – Pavilion – Chautauqua – (for residents)

Fri. June 15 – Relay for Life Riverbend – Alton Amphitheater

Sun. June 24 – Jerseyville UMC – Jerseyville – 6pm

Sun. July 8 – St. Ambrose Catholic Church – Godfrey – 6pm

Sun. July 15 – SS Peter and Paul Catholic Church – Alton – 6pm

Sun. July 22 – The Bridge Church – Alton – 6pm

TOUR – July 27- Aug 4 – Estes Park, Colorado

Sun. Aug 5 – Final Performances – Main Street UMC – Alton – 4:30 and 7:00pm