TRIBUTE SPEECH

FOR

CHARLES BETHEL

Hello everyone. Today we pay tribute to a very special woman, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. As the Director of our Church Choir, she inspired all of us to live in **harmony**-in so many more ways than we can count. She was my good friend for most of our lives and she inspired all whom she met with her love of people-especially her beautiful family, her deep faith, and her passion for and dedication to music. It was my privilege to know her as well as I did and it was a gift to be able to spend time with her as often as we could. In addition to our mutual commitment to the church choir, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I, along with her husband \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sang together in a quartet for thirty years. (**If you want to make a sweet little joke you can say**) I suppose you could say that with our mutual love of music-with the way the music moved us and the words continuously worked to renew our faith; we were true “**Partners in Rhyme**.” (**Wait for the laugh**).

In Psalm 5:11 we learn, “But let all who take refuge in Thee rejoice, let them ever sing for joy; and defend them, that those who love Thy name may exult in Thee.”  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ may be gone from this earthly plane but she truly lives on in all of us. Every time we walk into this church we will think of her. Every time the choir enriches us with that heartfelt combination of sweet sounds mixed with words of faith, every time we hear a note or a song that places a smile on our faces, let’s think of it as a loving wink from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Every time we tell a story that reminds us of her, her star in heaven glints a little brighter. With each encounter with her wonderful and loving husband, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, her devoted children, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and her precious grandchildren, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we will be reminded that her light and legacy continue to inspire.

The great composer Igor Stravinsky once said, “The Church knew what the psalmist knew: Music praises God. Music is well or better able to praise HIM…. It is the Church’s greatest ornament.” And \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was a master at directing our choir. For twenty-five years she led us and inspired us to constantly seek and achieve greater balance and accord that went well beyond the music itself. Individual members may have come and gone during the years of her tenure as the Choir Director here at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church, but one thing remained constant and that was the context of love, faith, cooperation, and community fostered by her care and attention. Being a part of a group like our choir teaches us the ultimate in blending our hearts and our voices into one beautiful sound and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ knew just how to keep us together. She cared deeply for the choir members and her love and caring showed in everything she did.

There is a hymn that was written at the end of the nineteenth century by a man named Johnson Oatman. Although he is known to have written several thousand hymns, I would like to share these words with you from his hymn called “Count Your Blessings”:

“When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed,

When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,

Count your many blessings; name them one by one,

And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.”

I am very clear that one of the great blessings in my life was to have known and been such good friends and choral partners with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I am sure you would all agree that we are all so much richer for having known her. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ made “beautiful music” with her devoted husband \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and together they dedicated their lives to sharing their joy and love of life with everyone they know. There is an expression that teaches us, “I am part of all that I have met.” To me, when I think of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**please use her first and last name here**), I am grateful that expression is true. Although I am sure we will all miss her tremendously, there will always be a smile on my face as I recall her laugh, her guidance, her sound and her love of her work with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church choir. Thank you all.