

# Rain outside but music inside at St. Thomas Church

## SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Outside raindrops were filling the air but inside music filled the air.

And the music was provided by six choirs who each provided vocal musical performances in what was called "A Choired Afternoon" on Sunday, Oct. 29 at St. Thomas Anglican Church in Stittsville.

The grand finale and a highlight of this musical afternoon was the performance of these six combined choirs, directed by Linda Crawford of the Goulbourn Jubilee Singers along with accompanist Josh Zentner-Barrett, performed Oscar Peterson's "Hymn to Freedom" followed by "The Irish Blessing." There were choir members from wall to wall, filling up the front of the church, for this rousing conclusion to this 75 minute afternoon of music.

The six choirs which performed in this "A Choired Afternoon" included the host St. Thomas Anglican Church choir, the Ottawa Harmony Singers, the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church choir of Stittsville, Rare Blend, the All

Saints' Westboro/St. Matthias Anglican Church choir and the Goulbourn Jubilee Singers.

The St. Thomas Anglican Church choir, under the direction of Patricia Brush with accompanist Naomi Watson-Laird, opened the afternoon with three songs including the inspiring and always popular "Amazing Grace."

The Ottawa Harmony Singers, also directed by Patricia Brush with Kellina Gehrels as the accompanist, sang three familiar old favourites, "Side By Side," "Sunrise Sunset" and "When You Wore a Tulip." This group began as a group of Dutch Canadian singers in 1953, becoming the Dutch Choral Society in 1956. In 2008, it switched to a more varied musical repertoire under the new name the Ottawa Harmony Singers.

The nine voices of the choir of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church of Stittsville, accompanied by Eleanor O'Connor, finished up their two-song performance with the lively "And all the people said Amen."

Rare Blend, a six-member female ensemble which was formed in 2001, is known for performing its own arrangements and that's what

it did at this "A Choired Afternoon," with all three of its musical offerings being its own arrangements. A flute and piano were the accompanying instruments.

The All Saints' Westboro/St. Matthias Anglican Church choir, formed when the two churches united, presented "When in Our Music God Is Glorified," an 18th century melody which featured organ accompaniment, along with "For the Beauty of the Earth" with piano accompaniment.

The 31-voice Goulbourn Jubilee Singers choir which performed at this "A Choired Afternoon" sang "Ubi Caritas," a Latin piece, along with Gordon Lightfoot's "Song for a Winter's Night."

Another attraction of this "A Choired Afternoon" was an organ solo by Deirdre Piper who played "A Trumpet Minuet." Dierdre has been active with the Royal Canadian College of Organists, having served as president of the Ottawa Centre group and also chair of the membership committee of the national group.

This "A Choired Afternoon" was held as a fundraiser for the Stittsville Food Bank and raise funds it did. At the end of the day, a total of \$1,500 was raised for the Stittsville Food Bank. In addition, three large bins of non-perishable food items were col-

lected.

Theresa Qadri, chair of the Stittsville Food Bank, in her remarks at the event, said that the Stittsville Food Bank is a way that the community can help those who are in need of a helping hand. This help may be needed because of a lost job, a sick family member, a sick child, lack of a pension, falling behind in paying bills or other reasons. The Food Bank is there so that there can be food on the table in such situations.

This first-ever "A Choired Afternoon" came about after a suggestion for such a multi-choir choral afternoon was made during the ecumenical Good Friday Walk in Stittsville earlier this year.

Pat McNally, who served as the MC for the event, suggested in his concluding remarks at the event that perhaps such a multi-choir afternoon of music may happen again in the future.



*Submitted*

**Linda Crawford (centre, front), director of the Goulbourn Jubilee Singers, directs the six-choir combined choirs in the finale at the "A Choired Afternoon" concert at St. Thomas Anglican Church in Stittsville on Oct. 29.**