

## ASHLAND UNIVERSITY CHOIR

The Ashland University Choir is composed of singers representing many academic majors across campus. Each year the members are selected by private audition and rehearse three days a week. The ensemble performs programs of unaccompanied literature of all eras as well as major works with orchestra. This year's touring group is singing at high schools and churches in Ohio, culminating with a visit to Louisville.

The 2026 Tour program includes selections from throughout their 2025-2026 concert season. Pieces by Palestrina, Britten, and Handel are featured along with those of Effinger, Whitacre, Hogan, and Gibbs. The Ashland University Chamber Singers will contribute madrigals, part-songs, and more popular charts from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Our choral-orchestral repertoire has included these larger works: the Vivaldi *Gloria* and Rutter *Requiem*, Bach's *Christ lag*, *Carmina Burana*, *Messiah*, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The Choir regularly has performed with the Ashland Symphony Orchestra as well as the Ashland Chamber Orchestra.

In addition to the University Choir, Ashland University offers Chamber Singers and Ashland Area Chorus. Most years there are a couple student-run groups that focus on more popular musical styles.

**Dr. Rowland ("Ron") Blackley** is Professor of Music, Chair of the Department, and Director of Choral Activities at Ashland University, where he conducts the University Choir, Chamber Singers, and Ashland Area Chorus. He supervises all aspects of the choral program and teaches in the areas of conducting and music education. While he deals primarily with choral groups now, Dr. Blackley has conducted orchestras, bands, and musical theatre productions throughout his career. Before coming to Ashland, he taught and conducted at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, Kent State University, Lindsey Wilson College, and high schools in Ohio and Colorado.

A graduate of Concordia College (NY), Blackley received his Master's degree from Kent State and his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Colorado. He is an Associate of the American Guild of Organists and currently serves Peace Lutheran Church, Ashland. Ron is a member of the Dalcroze Society and NAFME, and a life member of ACDA. He is a seasoned clinician (vocal and church music), adjudicator (vocal, choral, piano), guest conductor (choral and orchestral) and composer, with over 35 choral compositions published.

## ASHLAND UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1878 by the Brethren Church, Ashland University is a mid-size, private university conveniently located halfway between Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio. Offering undergraduate, graduate and professional programs, AU puts the "Accent on the Individual" by combining strong applied academic programs with a distinguished faculty and staff who build nurturing relationships with their students.

Choral music has enjoyed a tradition of excellence and plays a significant role in the cultural life of Ashland University. Dr. Rowland Blackley is only the fifth choral conductor in the past 90 years at AU. The Department of Music offers programs leading to the Bachelor of

Music degree in music education (with an Ohio teaching license) and performance, and a Bachelor of Arts degree with several degree options. Faculty members are all experts in their field and many are actively performing artist-teachers. A wide range of vocal and instrumental ensembles offers both music majors and non-music majors opportunities to participate and grow as young musicians. Significant scholarship money is available to students majoring in music, and participation grants are offered to qualified singers and instrumentalists in other majors to encourage ensemble participation.