



May 12, 2026

Dear friends,

As we conclude our 2025–26 season, we invite you to join us for a concert that celebrates the many ways we seek, discover, and hold onto connection. We hope you will be with us for this very special event.

The Hope of Loving will be presented on Saturday, May 30 at St. Mary of the Bay in Warren and on Sunday, May 31 at Grace Episcopal Church on Westminster Avenue in Providence. Our 80-voice chorus will be accompanied by string quartet and piano.

This program brings together composers who explore the human spirit through nature, beauty, vulnerability, and compassion. Each piece offers a different doorway into connection—within ourselves, with one another, and with the world around us. For more information about this music, please see the reverse side.

We offer this concert as an invitation: to breathe deeply, to listen closely, and to reconnect—with nature, with beauty, with mystery, with one another, and with the hope that love can still shape our world.

We would be honored to share this experience with you.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Noel".

Christine Noel
Artistic Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elaine Cunningham".

Elaine Cunningham
Executive Director

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A HOPE OF LOVING

Connect with the earth. *The Peace of Wild Things* by Jake Runestad

- When anxiety and despair become overwhelming, nature offers a refuge from the burdens of human thought, especially the "forethought of grief" that wild creatures never carry. By entering the quiet presence of the natural world, one can find temporary freedom from fear and a return to inner balance.

Connect with beauty in unlikely places. *Westminster Bridge* by Ola Gjeilo

- Ola Gjeilo sets a poem by William Wordsworth inspired by a dawn view of London. The text captures a moment when the line between the natural world and the city softens, suggesting that beauty and calm can emerge in unexpected places when we pause long enough to truly see them.

Connect with the unknown. *The Secret of the Sea* by Jake Runestad.

- Runestad calls the piece a "journey of the human spirit." Whitman and Longfellow open it with joy, wonder, and a longing to understand the "secret of the sea," a metaphor for the search for meaning. The second part turns turbulent, with the sea reflecting chaos and fear. The final movement, drawn from the Inuit shaman Uvavnuk, brings a moment of illumination as light breaks in. By opening ourselves to nature's vastness, we glimpse clarity, renewal, and spiritual freedom.

Connect with our deepest nature. *Flower into Kindness* by Jake Runestad.

- Love is our deepest nature: We are made of love; we are called to love; when we act from love, kindness naturally blooms.

Connect in the present. *If I Say Yes* by Dale Trumbore

- Love and commitment are not about certainty or predicting the future, but about choosing one another in the present, with honesty, vulnerability, and the awareness of life's imperfections. It's about embracing uncertainty, choosing each other every day, and finding meaning in the small, imperfect moments that make a life together.

Connect through music. *Sing Gently* by Eric Whitacre

- Composed during the pandemic and recorded by a virtual choir of 17,572 people from 129 countries, *Sing Gently* embodies the belief that community, unity, empathy and compassion enable us to endure and heal.

Connect through grace. *Amazing Grace* arranged by Ēriks Ešenvalds

- Grace begins personally but expands outward, becoming something shared, sustaining, and universal. The arrangement starts with the personal confession of a solo voice, moves to communal support as the choir surrounds the melody, and expands into a rich, eight-part texture as the music concludes with a ecstatic, transcendent affirmation.

Connect through love. *The Hope of Loving* by Jake Runestad

- *The Hope of Loving* suggests that love—vulnerable, active, and compassionate—is the force that sustains us and connects us to one another.

Connect. "All of Us" by Craig Hella Johnson (from *Considering Matthew Shepard*)

- The final movement of *Considering Matthew Shepard* reminds us that Matthew's death is not just one person's tragedy. Healing, justice, and transformation become possible only when we embrace our shared humanity—and choose to build a world where dignity and compassion prevail.