

Buford Street Choir to Present Handel's "Messiah"

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The Buford Street United Methodist Church choir will sing the Easter portion of Handel's *Messiah* on Palm Sunday, April 9, at 11 a.m.

Messiah covers the entire life of Jesus, with selections of the choral work divided into Christmas, Easter and the Eternal Reign. It was composed by German composer G.F. Handel (1685-1757).

The choir will perform *Messiah's* Easter songs - "Surely He Hath Borne Our Grievs," "Since By Man Came Death," "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth" and "Hallelujah."

The choir will be accompanied by a seven-piece orchestra.

Limestone College junior Justin Addington is the conductor. Addington has served as organist and choir conductor for Buford Street United Methodist Church for the past two years.

Addington and other members of the Limestone College chorus sang Handel's *Messiah* at their last Christmas concert. After hearing the performance, Buford Street United Methodist Church choir members indicated their interest in learning the Easter section of the



masterwork. The entire three-hour composition is rarely performed in its entirety, with most choral groups choosing to either perform the Christmas portion or the Easter and the Eternal Reign sections together. The Buford Street Methodist Church choir is performing the Easter songs from *Messiah* for the first time in 30 years.

Addington has some insight on the composing of Handel's masterpiece from his music studies at Limestone College.

"Opera houses closed down during Lent. People had the idea that they should use this time to reflect on Jesus' life. Composers would write religious music pieces to perform," Addington said. "The composing of the *Messiah* was a very religious experience for Handel. Accounts I have read about Handel say he wept after writing the *Hallelujah Chorus*. He felt he had seen the very face of God."

The Buford Street United Methodist Church choir will be joined by several guest singers for Sunday's performance. Guest vocalists include Sara Ferguson,

Nicole Keaton, Judith Rozsa, Lori Lee, Leslie Harmon, Brad Patterson and Matthew Giles.

The orchestra is composed of Roy Price (violin I), Stephanie Atkinson (violin II), Mary Ada Poole (viola), Brian Horn (trumpet), Nancy Brown (harpsichord), Janet Allison (organ) and Limestone College music professor Dr. James Ackman (timpani).