

Chapter History of Goshen Threshold Singers

2025

The Goshen Threshold Singers chapter was first conceived when Ruth Guengerich heard about her friend's involvement in the Blue Ridge Threshold Choir. Ruth invited some friends to join her to further explore Threshold Choir International. They started singing together and became a chapter in 2019. When the pandemic struck in 2020 the group met via Zoom for several months. After the pandemic they continued to sing once a month at a group home but eventually disbanded due to lack of leadership.

Susan Gingerich had started the Hawkeye Threshold Singers in Iowa City in 2019 when she learned of the involvement in the Blue Ridge Threshold Choir of the same friend who inspired Ruth Guengerich. The Hawkeye Threshold Singers moved to practicing via Zoom during the pandemic, finding the songs to be comforting to their souls as they shuttered in their homes.

When Susan moved to Goshen in 2022, she contacted Ruth to learn how she could join the Goshen chapter. Learning that the Goshen chapter had disbanded, Susan was willing to help restart the group. Ruth contacted the previous members who also invited friends to come to an exploratory meeting to restart the Goshen Threshold Singers. Eleven interested women gathered in Ruth Kauffmann's home on April 17, 2023, to discuss further plans. Ruth Guengerich, the original founder, wasn't able to continue in the chapter.

The group decided to meet weekly on Wednesday afternoons at the Assembly Mennonite Church for one and a half hours to practice with Susan leading the group. They became a chapter again on September 12, 2023, with 11 members and gave their first bedside singing the following day. Goshen Threshold Singers currently has 14 official members with nine of them being original members that had gathered in April. Two of the previous chapter members continued with the revived chapter.

No members are related, none have written songs, and all members are only part of the Goshen Threshold Singers. Only Susan came from a previous Threshold group in Iowa when she moved to Goshen. An introductory session of invited prospective persons was held after two years with the goal of adding more members to facilitate bedside singing. Five women are being taught songs and exploring continued Threshold involvement. An annual introductory session is held to bring in new members.

Ten members regularly sing at bedside. The group sang at 36 bedsides in the first year averaging four to five a month. Bedside singing mostly occurs in a retirement center with the chaplains arranging for hospice patients to be sung to. Other bedside singing is done at the request of family members with relatives in their homes. Requests come by word-of-mouth referrals; no public advertising is done. Two song baths have been done—one each year.

A leadership team is made up of Susan Gingerich, Leader; Linda Christophel, Administrator; Ruth Kauffmann, Bedside Coordinator; Patricia Nuyken, Librarian; and Nancy Stegmann,

Member. The team meets monthly. There are four women in addition to Susan who help lead practices and anchor at bedside.

8/3/25 edited by LKier



Photo

R1: Patricia Nuyken, Susan Gingerich, Peggy Malott, Ruth Kauffmann; R2: Linda Christophel, Mairi Helmuth, Barb Landes, Ellie Yoder, Nan Stegmann, Rebecca Slough.