

## **Chapter History of Alpine Voices Threshold Choir, Canmore, Alberta 2025**

### **Chapter Formation and Founders**

Alpine Voices Threshold Choir gathered for the first time in June 2016. The chapter was started by Jan Tissandier and Gloria Phillips after they discovered Threshold Choir online. Jan remains active with the choir; Gloria has since moved away. The chapter's founding was inspired in part by Kate Munger's work and example.

### **Membership and Participation**

The chapter currently comprises four registered members and an additional seven to eight part-time participants who join as their schedules and residency allow. Four of the original members remain active. The group describes itself as "sisters in song," although no members are related by blood. One member moved to Canmore after singing with another Threshold chapter; no members currently sing in more than one chapter.

Five singers are generally available to call on for bedside sings and song baths. The choir rehearses twice a month and averages two to three bedside sings each month; the number of song baths varies.

### **Musical Contributions**

Members contribute original music to the repertoire. One song grew from a member's hiking pilgrimage, inspired by Thich Nhat Hanh, and opens with the line, "May your feet kiss the earth with every step you take." Another piece emerged collaboratively at a retreat and carries the refrain, "Somehow, together, we will greet the dawn."

### **Clients and Community Connections**

Most client requests come through referrals from local hospital staff or directly via choir members' networks. Because the choir is based in a town rather than a city, much of its work is rooted in personal relationships with healthcare professionals, local clergy, and the regional palliative care society. This informal network shapes a quieter, relational culture distinct from larger urban choirs.

### **Growth, Orientation, and Leadership**

Membership initially grew by word of mouth among singing friends and local choirs. Prospective singers are invited to attend several rehearsals so the group can assess fit. Those who feel aligned are encouraged to join Threshold Choir formally. The chapter uses a circle-of-leadership model. Key roles include a music director, a calendar keeper (who manages scheduling using the VolunteerSignUp app), a treasurer, and a hospital coordinator.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic paused bedside singing and contributed to a dip in membership. The choir adapted by meeting on Zoom and holding a handful of outdoor practices until in-person bedside work could safely resume.

**Culture and Identity**

Alpine Voices is a small, committed ensemble whose identity is shaped by Canmore's close-knit community. Their practice of singing at the bedside and holding song baths is carried out with humility and strong local ties. The chapter values relational referral pathways, informal collaboration with local care providers, and a musical practice of presence and compassion.