



Chapter History of Bellingham Threshold Singers

PO Box 5303
Bellingham, WA
98227

2025

Bellingham Threshold Choir (BTC) was founded in 2007 by Linda Allen, a well-known musician in the Bellingham community. She recruited singers from an existing song circle she led, and ran newspaper ads to recruit new members. Kate Munger came to Bellingham now and then and led rehearsals. Of that original group, one woman, Elizabeth Howell, remains an active member and sings often at the bedside.

An article about BTC appeared in the local paper around January 2008, and three more members were recruited then and are still active. BTC started singing at bedsides that year. Some of the members were hospice nurses, and referrals came by word of mouth.

In December 2019, BTC became a §501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to facilitate fundraising, and the name changed to Bellingham Threshold Singers. BTS went on to sponsor a Threshold Retreat in Eastern Washington. BTS stuck to a nautical theme for naming roles, and the anchors (leaders of bedside sings) became the board, which developed an extensive training program for sails (the other bedside singers).

While we welcome new members at any time, they must complete our annual training program to be able to sing at bedside. Of our 38 current members (including a young woman and her grandmother), 20 are active bedside singers, and 6 of those are anchors having completed additional training and mentoring in that role. We are affiliated with Whatcom Hospice and sing at Hospice House every Wednesday. We also sing at numerous other care facilities for hospice patients and average more than 50 bedside visits a month. We currently also sing for therapy horses every other week!

We practice formally twice a month and have informal sessions most “off” weeks for fellowship and singing whatever those present would like. Janis Walworth, a former BTS member, has written songs in the TCI repertoire which we sing often.

We currently have a 6-to-7-member Board of Directors to handle the non-musical aspects of choir management. A Bedside Coordination Committee comprised of all the anchors oversees practices, training of sails and anchors, selection of shipwrights (practice leaders), repertoire,

and outreach. In addition to singing for Whatcom Hospice memorials held semiannually, we sing for individual memorial services on request and have participated in a local annual Day of the Dead event for several years.

Annual Sisterhood Gathering and Potluck. Beth Zacher, Jill Bliesner Burns, Charlotte Pollard, Karen Newton, Wingfield Bouchard, Sylvia Tag, Beck Littlefield, Kate Fallon, Lesley Fong, Mel Freal, Nancy Kaye, Lorna Davis, Carole Hammond, Merry Capozzolo, Ruth Mueseler, Andrea Reams, Diane Monsen, Sara Hill, Mathilda Wheeler, Elizabeth Howell, Jana Burk, Jonte Bouchard, Ellen Dodson

