

CHAPTER HISTORY OF NELSON THRESHOLD SINGERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

2026

Chapter Origins

The story of the Nelson Threshold Singers chapter begins in 2018. At a death-related workshop in Calgary, Suzanne Miller, Sandy Joyce, Lily Mayall, and Nancy Radonich were introduced to the work of Threshold Choir for the first time. Carla, from the workshop, came to Nelson and told the four attendees more about Threshold. They soon decided to start a Threshold chapter in Nelson.

Membership

Initially, Threshold singers from Vancouver Island and Boulder, CO, came to Nelson and did a song bath that was fairly widely advertised. Initial singers came from that event.

The chapter currently has 12 active members. There are 9 members who regularly sing at bedsides or at song baths. Two of our original members are still active.

The process for bringing in new members has varied over the years. The chapter now have a waiting list, and brings in new members 1-2 times a year. There is an interview process, similar to "Tea with Sudie", as well as a check-in at 3 weeks, and again at 3-6 months.

Practice and Community Singing

The chapter practices weekly. It has an average of 2 bedside sings per month and one song bath per month.

The chapter's clients include a friend of a member who receives a monthly sing following her chemo treatment, others from two long-term care facilities, and occasional hospital palliative clients.

Leaderful Structure

Rather than relying on a single director, the chapter adopted a "leaderful" model. Leadership responsibilities are shared, rotating as needed, and guided by principles inspired by Sociocracy. Core meetings provide a structured space for decision-making, reflection, and long-term visioning.

Impact of COVID-19

The arrival of COVID-19 brought abrupt changes. Access to care facilities was restricted, practice spaces were lost, and in-person sings were paused. For a group whose work depends on physical presence and shared breath, the disruption was profound.

Yet the chapter adapted. Connections were maintained through remote meetings, relationships with care partners were sustained where possible, and members continued to support one another through uncertainty. While the absence of bedside singing was deeply felt, the underlying commitment to the work endured.

Community Relationships and Ongoing Impact

Throughout its history, the chapter has cultivated a close relationship with the Nelson End of Life Society, sharing some members, and events - like Death Cafes and annual All-Souls (Halloween) event. The Society formed after Sarah Kerr (Sacred Deathcare) came to speak in our town. Her website offers many useful and inspiring videos on 'doing death better'.