William Ferris Chorale Performs in LaGrange
By Marilyn Cahill
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When the William Ferris Chorale performs its popular Christmas concert at 3 PM on Sunday, December 12th at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 203 S. Kensington in La Grange, it will be a homecoming of sorts.

"One of the first concerts the Chorale ever gave was at Emmanuel Episcopal" said the ensemble's current Music Director, Paul French. From that early church program, given 39 years ago, the Chorale has grown into an internationally acclaimed ensemble with a dozen commercially available compact disc recordings and was named Artist in Residence at Loyola University. "For the past five years it has been my delight to conduct these twenty-four stellar professional singers that comprise the William Ferris Chorale, and to present concerts that regularly thrill audiences and critics alike." The Chicago Tribune's music critic John Von Rhein proclaimed: "The ensemble has regained its well remembered form since Paul French became music director. He has infused it with new vitality, new vision, new purpose."

Paul French is himself no stranger in the western suburbs. He has served as Music Director at St. John of the Cross Church in Western Springs and St. Vincent Ferrer Church in River Forest.

The December 12th concert will include a wide range of musical styles spanning three centuries and a veritable snowstorm of carols. Included in the performance will be the rarely heard work A Boy Was Born, by Benjamin Britten, whose tour de force was penned when this English composer was just 19 years old. Britten described this work as a "Carol with variations for unaccompanied choir" and its tuneful melodies in settings of the texts Lullay, Jesu, The Three Kings, and In the Bleak Mid-Winter, and others are colorfully linked by resounding Noels!