

Lee University Festival Choir Performs at Obama's Inauguration

After two months of preparation and anticipation, the 200-voice Lee University Festival Choir performed before an international audience at the second inauguration of **President Barack Obama**.

The choir's performance came following an invitation from Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), who visited the Lee University campus in Cleveland, TN four days prior to the Nov. 6 election to invite the school to participate.

"We don't yet know who will be inaugurated next January," Alexander said at a Nov. 1 chapel service at Lee, "But we do know who will be the performing choir ... Lee University!"

Obama went on to win a second term in office, but the result did not change the invitation from the senator, who serves as vice chairman of the Inaugural Planning Committee along with Sen. Charles Schumer. (D-NY).

The choir left Lee University Friday morning on five buses and arrived in Washington, D.C. 13 hours later. Among those accompanying the Festival Choir members were Lee University vice presidents and the directors of the seven Lee performing groups which comprise the mass choir. On the way to the nation's capital, the convoy of buses stopped at the Virginia Church of God campground in Roanoke where they enjoyed lunch on the grounds.

Last Thursday, prior to the choir's departure, the choir gave a community concert in Conn Center on the Lee campus. They performed their repertoire of eight songs and were given a send-off by Cleveland, TN Mayor Tom Rowland, who praised the

choir's opportunity to represent the city, Tennessee and the United States.

Lee University President Dr. Paul Conn commented during the event that, "There are more than 10,000 college choirs in the United States, but the only one performing during the inauguration will be Lee University!"

The choir began Monday morning with a 4:30 wake-up call and a journey to the Senate Office Building for a rehearsal. Lee University was featured in the pre-inaugural activities, where just after 9:30 am, the choir took the spotlight. They sang a selection of songs which included "Saints Bound for Heaven," "Hymn for America," and "Chattanooga Choo-Choo."

Their performance took place on the upper portico of the Capitol, just above where the president delivered his address later that morning. Throughout the inauguration ceremony, the choir and Lee staff, including Conn, were seated on the upper portico with a birds-eye view of the proceedings, which included vocal performances by James Taylor, Kelly Clarkson and Beyonce Knowles. The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir performed "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."