



# ***Highest Praise Choir***



## **I. Membership Handbook**

To help you feel at home and find your service here, we would like to share the following information with you. It may take you a couple of weeks to learn all of the procedures. If you are not sure about what to do, please ask any of our veteran members. They will be happy to help!

### **GUIDING BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES**

- #1) Faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit and reflects the character and nature of our Father.
- #2) There is no such thing as a choir volunteer. Each member of the Highest Praise Choir is here by the call of God on their lives to faithfully minister to Him and His church through worship and music.
- #3) *Our best for His best.* We strive for excellence (not perfection). Excellence honors the Lord and inspires people.

### **MISSION STATEMENT OF THE WORSHIP MINISTRY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

To provide tools of engagement of the heart of men to the heart of God in an environment of authentic worship to the end that God would be magnified and life-change would result.

## CORE VALUES

- ▶ The Bible will unquestionably form the foundation and every guiding principle for the Worship Ministry.
- ▶ Worship is a **response** to a holy God.
- ▶ Artistic expressions provide a vehicle by which the human spirit can **connect** with the Holy Spirit
- ▶ The primary *goal* of a worship service is to **engage** the heart in worship
- ▶ The primary *result* of worship is **life-change**
- ▶ If the **process** is Christ-honoring, the product will be acceptable
- ▶ God demands and deserves the **worship** of his people

## OUR PURPOSE

*To be worshipers..*

*“The people whom I formed for myself will declare my praise.” Isaiah 43:21*



## **II. Information About Choir**

### **WEDNESDAY NIGHT REHEARSAL SCHEDULE**

Wednesday night choir rehearsals are held in Room CC 326, they begin promptly at 6:30 PM. and end at approximately 8:00 PM. Childcare is provided during this time (no reservations necessary). Rehearsal music and your nametag will be in the hallway. Please pick up a complete set of music and your tag before entering the choir room.

### **PHOTOGRAPH**

A photograph will be taken of each member for our membership records.

### **MUSIC**

Before a Sunday service, all related music can be picked up in the choir loft at the 8:30 am rehearsal time. Please put the music in the white folders found in the robe room. At the end of a service, please return your music to its appropriate stack located by the north door exit of the choir loft. Remember to also return your folder to its appropriate spot.

Before a Wednesday night rehearsal, all related music can be picked up on the tables outside DC Room 326. After choir rehearsal, please return your music to its proper stack in the hallway.

Music may be checked out through the Highest Praise Choir Music Librarian. However, please return music as soon as you are finished with it at home. Music is very expensive and unreturned music results in our having to spend money to duplicate originals. Help us to be good stewards of the Lord's resources.

# SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

- 8:30 Warm up (usually in the Worship Center)
- 8:45 Seat assignments (2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Worship Center in Music Suite)
- 8:55 Prayer and announcements in the Music Suite
- 9:00 Lead Worship
- 10:25 Gather in Music Suite (2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Worship Center) for notes or changes from the first service
- 10:45 Lead Worship



Most of the time, choir members leave the loft just before the sermon begins. Please wait until dismissed by the Worship Pastor or after the prayer is through to leave your positions and listen to the sermon. It is best to reenter the Worship Center by going outside and walking around to the front entrance foyer and entering through the left or right front doors.

## BIBLE STUDY ATTENDANCE

Choir members are encouraged to be involved in a small group Bible Study class on Sunday mornings.

A Bible Study Class, called *Scripture Seekers*, which allows members to minister at both Sunday morning services, has been established for orchestra and choir members. The class meets immediately after the orchestra and choir leave during the first worship service. The class dismisses in time to return for the second service. The class meets in Room DC 303 from approximately 9:30 - 10:25 AM. Although this is a uniquely designed Bible study for Worship Ministry members, the class is not limited to orchestra and choir members. Many spouses, friends and family are also enrolled in the class.

## **CHOIR FOLDERS**

You will have a choir folder to use during the service. Please make sure to put your music in these folders and carry them into the choir loft. If you did not pick up your music in the choir loft you may pick it up on the table in the Music Suite. Please be sure to take out the previous Sunday's music and stack it neatly on the table in the music suite.

## **SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES**

We have many opportunities for service, just ask! The service teams functioning within our choir are described in *VII. Leadership Structure*.

# III. REQUIREMENTS FOR CHOIR PARTICIPATION

The requirements are the following:



- †† Born again worshipper
- †† Heart for worship
- †† The gift of music
- †† Maintain a Christ-honoring lifestyle
- †† Maintain a 75% attendance participation in rehearsals and services

Currently, vocal interview is required for participation in the Highest Praise Choir. The interview helps best place your voice in the correct section of the choir.

## FAITHFUL CHOIR MEMBERSHIP

Highest Praise Choir members are:

- ▶ Faithful in attendance to the rehearsals that occur on Wednesday nights at 6:30 PM.
- ▶ Faithful in attendance on Sunday morning worship services (8:30 AM warm-up, 9:00 AM and 10:45 AM Services)
- ▶ Faithful to attend rehearsals even when the choir is not singing the following Sunday.
- ▶ Faithful to lift up the Worship Ministry and its leadership in prayer
- ▶ Faithful to notify the Worship Ministry office of pending absences

**Worship is...** a response both personal and corporate to God for who He is! And what He has done! Expressed in and by the things we say and the way we live.

## FAITHFULNESS IN ATTENDANCE

A minimum of 75% attendance at all services and rehearsals are required for membership in the Highest Praise Choir. If you are unable to commit at this level, please talk with the Worship Pastor about your particular circumstances. Otherwise, it is best to wait until a different season in your life when you can commit at this level.

When you must be away, please fill out an absentee form. If an unanticipated absence occurs and you have not filled out the absence form, please contact Pam at (561) 650-7400 ext. 7404 or on the weekends call Chuck at 801-6412.

You do not have to participate in the Singing Christmas Tree in order to participate in the Highest Praise Choir; however, we encourage all members to be a part of this incredible opportunity.

ABSENTEE CARD	
Name:	_____
Today's Date:	_____
Anticipated Date(s) of Absence:	_____
Sundays Absent:	_____
Wednesdays Absent:	_____
Reason:	_____
	_____

## SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP ETTIQUETTE

We are not using robes at this time, so we color coordinate our Sunday morning worship service attire. We announce the upcoming color at the rehearsal on Wednesday prior to the Sunday service. The list is also found in the Highest Choir Praise Notes for a month at a time. Please no perfumes or colognes, but deodorant is a must. Please come with your heart prepared to worship and to lead worship.

## **REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE FOUNDATION.**

Your faithfulness to the Highest Praise Choir is critically important. Your servant attitude and consistent attendance in choir rehearsals are vital for the health of our Worship Ministry family.

## **ACTIVELY PURSUE A CLOSER WALK WITH THE LORD.**

Daily quiet times spent in prayer and the Word are your lifeline to spiritual health and ultimately to our effectiveness in ministry. You cannot lead others to the place where you have never been. Worship Ministry members must make the passionate pursuit of God a priority.

## **SEEK TO POINT OTHERS TO THE LORD.**

This is accomplished through our faces, our voices, and our personal appearance. How you look may have no effect on how you worship but could have a strong impact on how someone else worships.



*Hunger* is the  
most attractive  
thing we have to  
offer the Creator.

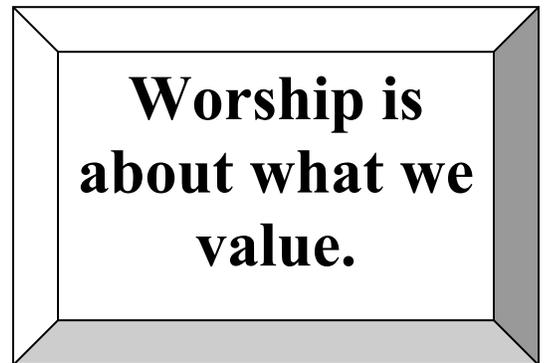
## **IV. Special Items**

### **HIGHEST PRAISE CHOIR MINISTRY FUND**

The Highest Praise Choir maintains a special ministry fund. On a volunteer basis, each member is asked to contribute to this fund when the basket is passed on the first Wednesday night of each month. We remember our members at times of extreme crisis, births, deaths, and hospital stays.

### **SUMMER SABBATICAL**

The Highest Praise Choir will take a brief sabbatical during part of the month of July (exact dates to be announced). If you have vacation options, please take advantage of this “down time” so that we may be as strong as possible in our active months.



### **CHILDCARE**

Childcare is available during weekly Wednesday rehearsals and special seasonal rehearsals. Childcare for seasonal rehearsals that do not occur on Wednesday is by reservation only. Please sign up or call Child Care Coordinator at least two weeks in advance to secure a reservation for your child. If you sign up, please be sure that your child attends since childcare workers are hired especially for your child for seasonal rehearsals. No reservation is needed for childcare on Sunday mornings or during our regular Wednesday rehearsals.

### **SHEPHERDING MINISTRY**

This ministry is specifically for Worship Ministry members that are in need. If you or someone you know is in need of help, is ill or hospitalized, or in need of special prayer, see page 17 for the people and number to call.

## **MISSION TRIPS**

The Highest Praise Choir will be involved in periodic mission trips.

## **THE WORSHIP OFFICE**

We are here to serve you! If you want to make an appointment, please call the Worship Office at 650-7400 x7404. Office hours are from 8:30 AM until 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. For emergencies, Chuck may be reached via cell phone at 801-6412.

E-mail us at anytime at [clewis@fbcwpb.org](mailto:clewis@fbcwpb.org) or [pwilson@fbcwpb.org](mailto:pwilson@fbcwpb.org)

## V. YOUR WORSHIP STAFF

**Chuck Lewis**, Worship Pastor

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**Christian Ramos**, Associate Worship Pastor

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Administrative Assistant

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**Gordon Nelson**, Director of Keyboards

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**Cindi Permenter**, Director of Handbells

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**Maureen Crespo**, Assistant Choir Coordinator

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**Maureen Crespo**, Choir Vice President

[mcrespo@fbcwpb.org](mailto:mcrespo@fbcwpb.org)

# VI. THE SINGING CHRISTMAS TREE

You do not have to participate in the Singing Christmas Tree in order to participate in the Highest Praise Choir; however, we encourage all members to be a part of this incredible opportunity.

The Worship Ministry gives leadership to a large community-wide Christmas celebration called the Singing Christmas Tree. It is evangelistic in nature but also will thrill the believer as we celebrate the birth of Christ.

There are six components of preparation/presentation: (1) Fall Retreat, (2) Bonus Group Rehearsals, (3) Personal Preparation, (4) Section Rehearsals, (5) Production Week, (6) Presentations

## **1. Fall Retreat**

## **2. Bonus rehearsals for the Singing Christmas Tree:**

Bonus rehearsals allow the choir to come together for a more focused time of rehearsing for a certain project. They are held on Saturday's with breakfast served at 8:30 AM. We normally do not rehearse our Singing Christmas Tree music at our regular Wednesday night rehearsal time as we are still preparing to lead worship on Sunday mornings.

## **3. Personal Preparation**

Each choir member will be given a part tape with his or her part and a copy of all the music. It is each member's responsibility to personally prepare his or her music with memorization as the ultimate goal by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **4. Section Rehearsals...**

*Section rehearsals are typically held at a choir member's home and is coordinated by the Section Leaders.*

Soprano ~ Alto ~ Tenor ~ Bass

## **5. Production Week...**

### ***Work Through Rehearsals***

Act 1

Act 2

### ***Dress Rehearsals***

The “undress rehearsal” – all the way through with stops; costumes for actors only

Dress Rehearsal – all the way through without stops

***6. The Singing Christmas Tree presentation dates will be announced before our summer sabbatical in July.***

# VII. PRAISE TEAM

Praise Team members are mature in Christ, both vocally and spiritually. The Praise Team is typically composed of 3-6 members that assist the Worship Pastor in worship leadership on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights.

## **Praise Team Members...**

- ◆ Are faithful members of the Highest Praise Choir (or other related Worship and Creative Arts Ministry).
- ◆ Rehearse on Monday evenings from 6:00 PM until 7:45 PM for Sunday morning teams and Monday evenings from 7:00 PM until 8:45 PM for Wednesday evening teams.
- ◆ Rehearse on Sunday mornings arriving before 8:00 AM and on Wednesday evenings arriving before 5:30 PM.
- ◆ Have a heart for worship and the gift of music.
- ◆ Are selected on the basis of heart, vocal skill, and vocal blend.
- ◆ Bring a tape recorder to rehearsal.
- ◆ Memorize their music.
- ◆ Are accountable for staying spiritually healthy by passionately and intentionally pursuing God.
- ◆ Are committed through September (except for college students who are away for the summer). Then, auditions are held again.

## **Praise Team Auditions**

To audition for a Praise Team position, please fill out an application and sign up for an audition. Auditions are officially held twice each year: August and February. People who come into the choir in the intervening times may schedule an audition and potentially serve as a substitute member of a Praise Team until the new cycle of teams begins (each September and March).

To audition, please be prepared to sing one song that demonstrates your vocal abilities. You may use accompaniment tracks or piano accompaniment (Chuck).

If you do not have a solo of this nature to sing, please prepare your favorite hymn or praise chorus for your audition.

## **Guidelines for Praise Team**

***UNDERSTAND THEIR PURPOSE.*** You are asked to be a *worship leader*, not a performer. The Lord is our audience. He accepts ministry, not performance. Vocal excellence is important and the energy communicated will hopefully be contagious; however, our primary goal is to engage the hearts of our people in worship and for us ourselves to worship.

***REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE FOUNDATION.*** Your faithfulness to the Highest Praise Choir is critically important. Your servant attitude and consistent attendance in choir rehearsals are vital for the health of our Worship Ministry family.

***ACTIVELY PURSUE A CLOSER WALK WITH THE LORD.*** Daily quiet times spent in prayer and the Word are your lifeline to spiritual health and ultimately to our effectiveness in ministry. You cannot lead others to the place where you have never been. Praise Team members must make the passionate pursuit of God a priority.

***ARE FAITHFUL IN PREPARATION.*** All Praise Team members bring a small tape recorder (or digital recorder) to each Monday night rehearsal. Preparation continues throughout the week by listening to the tape made in rehearsal. Sunday morning music is done from the heart and by heart (memorized). Praise Team members who cannot sing on their scheduled Sunday must let our office know at least two weeks in advance.

***MAINTAIN A GODLY ATTITUDE.*** You will fill out a six month commitment calendar. However, there may be times when we have to make adjustments. Please be patient with the changes as we seek to grow and change as the Lord leads.

***SEEK TO POINT OTHERS TO THE LORD.*** This is accomplished through our faces, our voices, and our personal appearance. How you look may have no effect on how you worship, but could have a strong impact on how someone else worships. Praise Team members dress modestly and appropriately being careful to focus attention to the Father and not on themselves. Ladies, please observe the following guidelines: High~Long~Loose! Tops must have sleeves and backs. Dress slacks are permitted. Skirts and dresses must be knee length or below. Please wear hose! Guys, please wear coat and tie.

# IX. 2009 Leadership Teams

## Choir Executive Officers

**President** - Greg Langowski

**Vice President** -Maureen Crespo

**Highest Praise Choir Coordinator** - Susan Collins

**Assistant Choir Coordinator** - Maureen Crespo

**Section Leaders** - Take attendance and contact those who are absent. Let choir coordinators know if there are any problems or sickness. Greet those in their section at Wednesday night rehearsals.

**Banquet Team** - Plans for the annual Singing Christmas Tree Appreciation Banquet. The planning should start the first of September or before. This team is also in charge of procuring outside entertainment for the banquet.

**Fellowship Team** - Plans choir fellowships. The spring/summer picnic and the fall kick-off are two major fellowships.

**Hospitality Team** - Coordinates refreshments at our bonus rehearsals.

Donna Dumond - 747-0356

Connie Smith

**Membership/Greeting Team** -greet members as they enter. Directs new members to assimilation team.

Susie Cavanaugh

Linda Hermoso

**Historian** - Documents all special events involving the choir. Pictures, programs, and a brief synopsis of the events are just a few ideas.

**Child Care Coordinator** – ensures that sign up sheets get circulated for several weeks prior to the cut off date for any bonus rehearsals we have. Coordinates with the churches childcare director on the needs of members and their children. Make sure the orchestra and drama families are included in the sign up process.

**Shepherd Ministry** – ministry to the special needs of our worship ministry family when a member has been in the hospital for surgery, or birth. Sending the appropriate gift (flowers, books, or cards) in a timely fashion. The money comes out of our benevolence offering taken once a month.

Charles and Carole Dupree – chairperson – 844-0977

Lou McCormack, prayer coordinator

Betsy Schuermann, ministry coordinator for western communities

**Treasurer** – collects the benevolence offering in the choir and orchestra on the first Wednesday night rehearsal of every month. Deposits the money in our special Highest Praise Choir Account and pays our bill every month.

Lou McCormack – chairperson - 964-1376

**Mission Team** – coordinates periodic mission ministries of the worship ministry.

**Recruiting Team** – actively recruits new members for the choir. Designs recruiting strategy.

**Intercessory Prayer Team** – lifts up the choir members, officers, and the Worship Pastor in prayer. Lifts up any special needs the choir has.

**Helping Hands Ministry** – anyone willing to be called in to help with special projects; such as mail outs, stuffing bulletins, SCT notebooks and other office functions.

**Ministry Fair Team**

**Assimilation Team** – greet and get paired with new member. Assist new member in completing the membership form and turn it in to choir coordinator.

Help new member get Wednesday's rehearsal music. Sit with them in rehearsal. Talk new member through Sunday morning procedures (arrival times, locations, and robes). Set a time and place to meet him/her on their first Sunday to get their folder with Sunday music for the first time. Follow up with a phone call within the first week.