

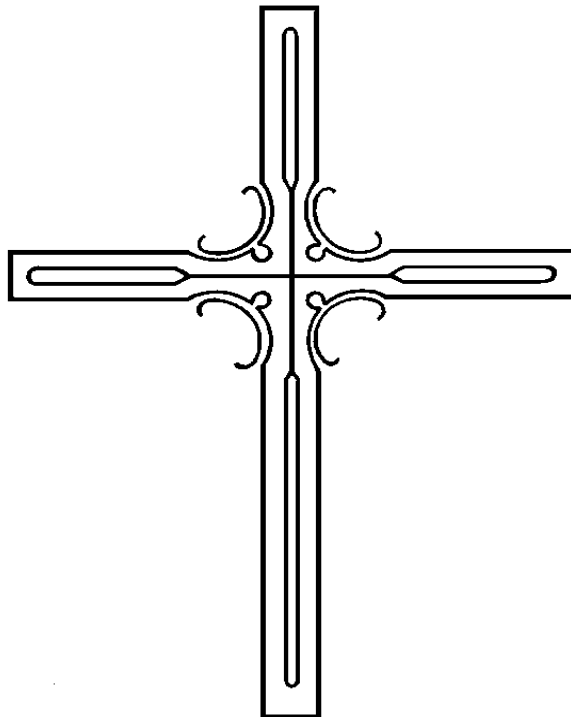
# *Lewinsville*

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## *Presbyterian Church*

### **Choir Parent Handbook**

**2019-2020**



**Director of Music Ministries - John Nothafft**

Cell: 202-758-6971

Email: [jnothafft@lewinsville.org](mailto:jnothafft@lewinsville.org), [jnothafft@u.rochester.edu](mailto:jnothafft@u.rochester.edu)

**Director of Handbells - Kylie Johnson**

Cell: 253-948-2724

Email: [Kyliearyn24@gmail.com](mailto:Kyliearyn24@gmail.com)

**Children's Music Specialist - Evan Ayars**

Cell: 703-282-6699

Email: [evan@evanayars.com](mailto:evan@evanayars.com)

## **Why?**

The information in this handbook is shared in the hope that child, parent, and music director will join together in taking a love for singing and music and with God's grace form a Christian calling of leading the people of God in worship through choral music and liturgical participation. The church choir is much more than a musical performance organization. At its heart, this choir is about Christian formation and developing character traits such as teamwork, commitment, stewardship, and development of God given gifts in the service of others.

### **Statement of Purpose**

To educate children in music and liturgy  
To form and nurture their character and habits  
To lead the congregation in worship  
To enrich the cultural life of the community

### **We sing our faith**

Psalms 104:33 - I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

Ephesians 5:19 - Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord,

Worship through song is a tradition that has been passed down through church history. Anthems are sung at the Offertory, where we offer our musical gifts in praise to God. The texts of the pieces we sing are often chosen for a particular purpose, according to the church calendar, the lectionary readings, and the sermon topic. During rehearsals we work so the children gain perspective on why we sing what we sing. We learn to read and understand the texts of the music we are singing so that Sunday services can be a true act of worship.

### **What Do Young People Learn While Singing in a Choir?**

When they become aware that their voice is heard above the others and they begin to blend their voices, they learn teamwork.

When they begin to appreciate, or "grow into" a piece of music, they learn patience.

When they refrain from talking and interrupting in rehearsal, they learn respect.

When they listen and concentrate during rehearsal, they learn self-discipline.

When they sing for local events, or at a nursing home, they learn community involvement, and giving back.

When they choose a rehearsal or performance over another event, they learn commitment.

When they bound out of their singing positions to give a high five because they finally sang their most difficult piece straight through for the first time, they learn perseverance.

When they perform their first solo in front of an audience, they learn risk-taking and self-confidence

When they perform that difficult piece successfully in a concert or church service, they learn genuine pride and self-esteem.

Research shows again and again that students have only to gain from, involvement in the arts. A well-organized and sustained education in music gives your child intellectual and creative skills that last a lifetime.

# **When?**

## **Rehearsals**

Rehearsals are weekly on Sundays.

Joyful Noise: 9:45-10:15

Junior Choristers/Chimers: 3:00-4:00

Puppets: 4:00-4:45

Lewinsville Choristers: 4:45-5:30

Lewinsville Bells: 5:30-6:15

Youth Group: 6:15-8:15

## **Services**

We sing on select Sundays of the year. A schedule will be provided for September-June. We ask to have children robed with music by 10:30 (and sometimes 10:40!) for an 11:00 am service. The occasional event will pop up and we'll notify you as soon as possible.

## **Attendance**

Please notify your Director by email in advance of absences if possible. Weekly attendance in rehearsal is how we build skills, community and learn the values of commitment and service. Honoring commitments are an important value in the formation of character as understood in the content of Christian formation.

Faithful and regular attendance is essential for the group as a whole (truly a "team"), especially on Sundays, and for each chorister individually (whose progress is slowed each time a rehearsal is missed). If for any reason your child is unable to attend a rehearsal or service, or must be late for a rehearsal, please notify your Director by e-mail or by phone.

Attention to attendance and punctuality gives the child a strong message that he or she is a valued member of the choir, and is missed when absent. The choir is a group effort much like a sports team: Everyone is essential. When one person is absent, the whole group is let down. The normal expectation is that every chorister will attend every rehearsal and service. It is helpful for the Director to know in advance which children will attend on a given rehearsal day.

## **Calmness and Commitment**

Virtually every child goes through periods where he or she doesn't want to attend rehearsal, come on Sunday, or even talks (sometimes passionately) about quitting choir. Peaks and valleys are the norm. Most children who are resistant during a downswing will grow out of and through this. Many experience periods of reluctance, but leave rehearsal with smiles on their faces.

Parents are the linchpin in these instances and must be relied on to remind boys and girls of the commitment they have made, and that there is a "team" depending on them. If there are particular areas of concern, please make the Director aware of them. Parents' support and encouragement are crucial to our endeavor and are deeply appreciated. It can't be done without you!

# **How to Help?**

## **Parent Participation**

Lewinsville's Choir Parents serve as a vital community for the choristers. We need volunteers to maintain a strong community. Please let us know if you or another adult caregiver in your household is willing to help in one or more of the following areas.

### **All Parents**

Parents Supervisors in Choir: The expectation is that all parents will take turns assisting with the weekly rehearsal. Parents will help keep track of attendance, birthdays in the choir, and assist as needed.

### **Supervision and Safe Church**

The policy of Lewinsville and of PCUSA is that no adult may supervise children alone. Parents are needed to assist in supervision. Lewinsville abides by a two person rule for any event working with children.

### **Parent/Director Communication**

Please be in touch throughout the choir season so that the director is aware of circumstances that may affect choir participation and behavior.

### **Appointments**

Parents are encouraged and welcomed to make an appointment with the director when there are concerns or suggestions. (Sundays or rehearsal times are not best for our director's full attention to your questions and concerns, and can forget things said verbally offhand.)

### **Parent volunteers**

### **Vestment Coordinator**

The vestment coordinator makes sure children have their robes, binder, and all other items before they sing on Sunday mornings. In September they assist with fitting, labeling, and assigning vestments. They make sure children are properly dressed, robes are in order, and that vestments and binders are stored neatly and in order before and after services.

### **Meal Coordinator**

The meal coordinator helps set up a schedule and remind and notify each parent when it's their turn to provide a snack for the children.

### **Special Interests**

Let us know if you have a special interest or specific talents you would like to help with during the year. Either keyboard, vocal, dance, artistic, costumes, organization et al are welcome!

## **What?**

We help provide free music education for the choristers and ringers. Evan Ayars, our children's music specialist will work with small groups and individually with children at their own levels on the music skills, music theory, and vocal training during Lewinsville Choristers rehearsals.

### **Incentives**

We will provide children Choir bucks with a goal/reward system. One buck per rehearsal. Bucks can be taken away if inappropriate behavior occurs. We will also work as a team towards a long-term goal/reward as well.

### **Mentor program**

For our grades 4-12 choir, we plan to assign an older youth to mentor and assist our younger musicians.

### **Summer Camps**

RSCM offers summer camps for choristers of all ages. They are incredibly rewarding and life changing opportunities for all who attend.

### **Choir Camp**

We hope to offer a week-long day camp next summer for the children's choir, held at Lewinsville, Summer of 2020 .

### **Choir Trip**

Most years we hope to take a trip together. Such occasions not only present a musical challenge, but also allow us to share our gifts in an uncommonly rewarding way. Traveling together creates an important bond among the singers, which is beneficial the year round.

# **Guidelines**

## **Bring best effort, attitude, and respect to all**

We want each chorister/ringer to feel nurtured, positive, and safe. Treat all with respect and kindness. To foster individual maturity and respect for the group's creative process and learning goals, common courtesy and good manners to each other and to adults are expected at all times.

## **Code of Conduct- The three B's**

In classical music we have Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, in choir we have..

Be Kind, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible.

### **Be Kind**

- Strive to make new friends – welcome and include new choristers
- Be supportive of and sensitive to your fellow choristers by treating them with respect and encouraging them to gain more skill and confidence
- Have a positive attitude toward choristers, staff, and activities to help create a happy, harmonious environment, and remember you are a role model for your fellow choristers

### **Be Respectful**

- Treat all choristers/ringers, staff, and parent volunteers with respect
- Listen and follow instructions – talk only when it is your turn
- Conduct yourself in a way that helps others to work and learn, not one that interferes with the work and learning of others
- Respect the commitment that choristers have made to each other and the amount of time that the choirs need to rehearse together. Be on time, ready to sing when rehearsals begin, and miss rehearsals only when it is absolutely necessary
- Treat all facilities used for rehearsal and services or any additional activities with respect, ensuring that we leave the space as good if not better than we found it.

### **Be Responsible**

- Turn off cell phones until rehearsals and events are over
- Take care of bathroom, drinking fountain and food needs before the rehearsal starts and use bathroom breaks during the rehearsal for emergencies only
- Do not eat food or chew gum during rehearsals or concerts
- Bring a water bottle to every rehearsal.
- Have your music folder and pencil with you at every rehearsal
- Sit/stand in rehearsals and concerts with your best, healthiest singing posture, so you can reinforce good vocal technique habits
- Be an active, focused participant throughout the rehearsal

### **Dress Code for Services**

Please refrain from wearing metal buttons, sequins, or rhinestones during bell events. Otherwise standard Sunday Church clothes are best.

### **Respect of Music and filing of music**

Lewinsville is blessed with a wonderful music library that we have been growing and using for many years. Our choir sings choral pieces that our previous choristers sang 10, 20, and 30 years ago. To make sure future children have the same experience as we do, please treat the music with respect, not tearing, ripping, or crumpling music. Please make sure to place music we have finished singing back in the music return shelf.

### **Home Practice**

Homework is usually not required in choir, but home study is always welcome and occasionally needed, particularly in preparation for a ribbon promotion. Singing along to recordings of the music we are singing at home and in the car is always recommended!

### **Observers**

Parents, friends, and family are always welcome to attend any and all rehearsals. Bring along friends, relatives, or prospective choir families (though it is best to notify the Director in advance).

### **The Choir Family**

Beyond our musical work together, we strive to build one another up in fellowship. Life-long friends are made as choristers; parents meet others with similar values. We encourage social occasions such as choir parties, sleepovers, etc. to strengthen friendships.

### **Recruitment**

The success of our program depends on our recruitment efforts, an ongoing process involving the choristers themselves, their parents, and friends of the choir. The assistance of the choir families in spreading information about the extraordinary musical education, social life, and satisfaction in achievement gained from participating in our program is essential! Extra brochures are available for passing on to interested families. Let's spread the word! It is word of mouth recruitment that remains our most valuable advertising tool!

## **Choir Covenant**

A Parent has read and understood the contents of the chorister/ choir parent handbook and discussed it with their youth choristers.

We the signed participants agree to communicate and cooperate in the best interest of the chorister

To prayerfully support the ministry of the choir and individual choristers

To participate in rehearsals and services as scheduled and notified in advance by the music director

To notify the music director in advance of absences when possible

To support the learning, community and service aspects choir as a means to discipleship and the development of a Christian calling by means of direct communication.

Director of Music Ministry\_\_\_\_\_

Director of Handbells\_\_\_\_\_

Children's Music Specialist \_\_\_\_\_

Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Chorister/Ringer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_