



Chancel Choir Attendance and Rehearsal Procedures

Welcome to a new choir season! It promises to be an enjoyable – and busy – year. Because we have such a busy season ahead, and will be covering a lot of music, it is important that we have some basic understandings about expectations regarding attendance and rehearsal procedure. Some of it is common sense - other parts of it require just a little thought. I value your commitment of time and talent to the choir, and I hope these guidelines will help us to respect each others' commitment, and still make wonderful music and have a good time!

1. Obviously, the general expectation (and the ideal) is that you be present for all rehearsals and Sundays that you are in town and healthy. Occasional work-related or school/family-related conflicts are understandable, but should be kept to a minimum. When they arise, ***please take your music with you or arrange to pick it up and do some review outside rehearsal.*** Aim for at least 75-80% attendance to get the most out of choir, and to make the most effective contribution to the group.
2. When you must be absent, as much advance notice as possible is helpful. Use the sign-out calendar on the robe closet door to indicate as far in advance as possible when you know you will not be present.
3. For last-minute absences, you may call either my voice mail (271-6513 ext. 109) or send e-mail to pdubois@thirdpresbyterian.org
4. If you miss two rehearsals in a row, it is best **not** to sing the following Sunday. If you will be away on a given Sunday, **please plan to be at rehearsal the previous Wednesday anyway** - we'll be spending most of our time working on pieces for future weeks, anyway!
5. Please avoid wearing strong perfume or cologne for rehearsals and services. Many people have respiratory difficulties or allergies, so please be considerate of everyone in the group.
6. Reporting times for services – Our warm-ups on Sunday mornings are very important in order to sing our best in worship. Reporting time for Chapel is 8:00am. In order to provide adequate warm-up for Sanctuary; provide ample time for robing and bathroom; **and** provide for a worshipful entrance into the Sanctuary, the **reporting time for Sanctuary warm up is 10:00am.** Those attending Adult Ed. Classes will be excused for arriving late, but should come to the choir room, robe, and arrange your music BEFORE going to Adult Ed.
7. Please make every effort to be on time. Parking can be tight on some Wednesday evenings, with multiple programs occurring. I will begin rehearsals promptly at 7:15 (or 10:00 a.m. on Sundays) so that I can be faithful to the 9:15 ending time. **If you are late, please wait near the door until a suitable break in the rehearsal/warm-up to get your folder and take a seat.** If you know ahead of time that you will be late to rehearsal, please let me know in advance, so the sexton can be notified to keep the doors unlocked. They are generally locked by 8:00pm, unless we know there will be late arrivals. Latecomers can also access the building from the Arnold Park lot by using the keypad by the door. The current code is (check with Peter), but changes periodically. Once inside the building, the code to get into the Parish House from the stairwell is (check with Peter).
8. Parking alternatives: Be aware that parking is available in the two church lots (Meigs St. and Arnold Park). In addition, parking is legal on both sides of East Avenue after 6:00pm during the week and on Sundays. Parking is also available behind the houses across East Avenue (best used on Sundays) and at the Jewish Federation, one block west of the church on Sibley Place. **DO** pay attention to alternate-side parking on Meigs Street!
9. Childcare is available for special Saturday rehearsals with advance notice. Please contact the church office one week in advance if care will be needed.

Logistics for rehearsals:

- Please arrange music in rehearsal order as soon as you arrive (posted on the board and in the newsletter found on your seat), so we can move efficiently through the rehearsal
- Please do not talk during the rehearsal of a piece, when another voice part is rehearsing, or when stopping to correct something – most of your questions will be answered – and time will be given to answer questions before going on to the next piece
- If you need to repair a piece of music, or sharpen a pencil, please wait until a suitable break in the rehearsal
- Have a pencil handy – and make breath marks or other notations as they are given
 - Don't be surprised if markings change! Music is a dynamic art and a living thing: it is not always performed the same way twice (sometimes not even in the same rehearsal)!
 - If you've missed a rehearsal on a piece, quietly get any new markings from a neighbor during a break in the rehearsal – or following the rehearsal
- Most rehearsals will have breaks – some will not. With a large number of people, it may not always be practical. If you need to leave the room for a moment, please do so discreetly
- When we go to the sanctuary to rehearse at end of the evening, please go directly there – do not take this opportunity for a “break” or to put your other music away, as it will delay the entire group

Tips for improved choral singing

- Try to apply some general concepts for most all pieces that we will do – this is part of the responsibility of being a singer in a choir, and shouldn't need to be stated every time by the conductor!
 - ALWAYS Eliminate final “r” sounds from words – sing a more neutral vowel
 - When an “r” is at the beginning or middle of a word, flip – or roll – it, ahead of the vowel
 - In words like “new”, “dew”, “endure” – include the diphthong (nyew, dyew, endyoor)
 - Hold your music up at a level that you can always see the conductor in your peripheral vision, and make easy eye contact for entrances, etc. (It also helps your voice project!)
 - ALWAYS listen to those around you, and make sure your voice is blending with theirs, not sticking out - and that you are matching vowels with those around you.
 - Listen for the other voice parts – and know how your part fits in with everything that is going on
 - Be aware of dynamic markings- but also be aware of musical shaping of lines, so that the music is never static, but is always coming from, or going to, somewhere (It is rare that you can sing too softly in quiet sections, but it is easy to sing too loudly much of the time!)
 - When learning a piece that is new to you, always sing lightly and softly in order to focus on pitch and so you can hear everyone and everything that is going on
 - Don't form an opinion about a new piece too quickly! Many of the best and most rewarding pieces are those that take a good bit of time and effort to “grow” on you!

Robe maintenance: We ask that you take responsibility for the care and cleaning of your own robe. Especially at the beginning of the season, and as needed, we ask that you take it home and clean it. They are machine washable - cold water - wash separately.

We may experience a temporary shortage of robes in the early weeks of the fall season. If you find that you need to “borrow” the robe of someone who is absent, please be sure to return it to the correct hanger at the end of the service.

Thank you for your commitment and for your willingness to share your talent and join voices with all in the choir to sing wonderful music and lead the congregation's worship of God!

~ Peter DuBois
September 2009