



SPIRIT WINGS CHOIR

CHOIR HANDBOOK

Spirit Wings Choir – Choir Handbook

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Welcome!

I want to take this moment to personally welcome you to the Spirit Wings Choir! I am excited you could join our choir family.

I feel our choir is unique in many ways when compared to other church choirs. For starters I feel we have a strong music library and an accomplished band of professional musicians which gives us the opportunity to perform a variety of musical styles effectively. But perhaps more noteworthy is the diverse make up of our choir. I believe our choir is a true representation of the Unity of Sacramento congregation and membership. What a joy it is to come together as one diverse family within the blessings of music!

I feel another blessing within our department is the music team I work on, specifically working with Rev. Charles Cooper, your choir director. I feel he and I compliment each other in so many ways, particularly with our music backgrounds and our respective strengths. I couldn't ask to be part of a more well-rounded team!

There are other advantages one may have being a member of our choir that you may not find in other places. From time to time we will have a guest choir conductor come in and do a vocal workshop. Additionally I periodically offer a music theory class to any interested choir members. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities and others as they present themselves.

I'm so happy to have you as a part of our choir family -
welcome to the Spirit Wings Choir!

Sincerely,

Chet A. Chwalik
Director, Department of Music and Performing Arts
Unity of Sacramento



Welcome to Spirit Wings Choir!

Thank you for taking the first step toward being a member of our fabulous Spirit Wings Choir community! Our choir is a diverse group of singers who are committed to ministering using the sound of our voice. Our intention is to deliver praise to God while raising spirits and bring inspiration to those within the sound of our voices.

Now that you are a member, here is what you need to do:

- Arrange for a quick audition with the Music Director. This is to determine your vocal range and get to know you a little better.
- Attend and participate in 3 consecutive rehearsals (held every Thursday evening from 7:30 pm to 9pm. Any exception to this must be approved by the Choir Director.
- Complete the attached questionnaire and return it to the Choir Director.

In addition to our rehearsals on Thursdays at 7:30pm, the choir is scheduled to sing the 4th Sunday of each month, during both the 9am and 11am services. The choir meets at 8:30am, 30 min prior to singing at the 9:00 am service, then meets again at 10:00 am for the 11:00am service. You will be notified of any exceptions...for example, the choir may be scheduled to sing the 5th Sunday of a particular month.

We are excited that you are here and have joined our music ministry. We look forward to seeing you at our next rehearsal!

One in Spirit,

Chet Chwalik
Music Director
Unity of Sacramento

Rev. Charles Cooper
Choir Director
Unity of Sacramento

Keith Patterson
President
Spirit Wings Choir



NEW MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE
(PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY)

Date _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____ - _____ - _____

Email: _____

Birthday (optional): Month _____ Day _____

Please describe your previous musical experience (including any instruments you may currently play):

Which vocal part do you believe your voice may be? (e.g., Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass)

How would you describe your knowledge of music theory? *

Extensive Studied music for ____ years Had a few lessons None

Additional information regarding music theory:

Additional talents/gifts (e.g., computer knowledge, organizational or marketing skills, etc.)

**** Knowledge of music theory is not mandatory in order to join Spirit Wings Choir.***

II. Choir Procedures and Guidelines

- ♪ Choir rehearsals are on Thursday evenings from 7:30 - 9:00 pm. These rehearsals are for going over songs we sing on Sundays. The choir sings the 4th Sunday of each month, unless otherwise directed. Additional rehearsals may be added for special services and events.

Rehearsals are very important! Rehearsals are used to learn and fine tune every music selection that the choir will be singing, including overall blending and phrasing as one choir. Please make every effort to arrive a few minutes early so that you can be a part of our opening prayer and all important warm-up.

- ♪ It is mandatory that you contact your section leader first, and/or the choir director if you cannot attend a rehearsal or singing day. Please do so as far in advance as possible.

- ♪ If you cannot attend a Thursday night rehearsal, you may not be singing on Sunday unless you get approval from the choir director. Also, it is imperative for the choir's success that you arrive on time for our Sunday performances. Excessive tardiness may result in you forfeiting singing on that Sunday, while repeated tardiness may result in your removal from the choir.

- ♪ It is highly recommended that choir members record their parts during rehearsal. Additionally the choir has access to its own website for learning lyrics and vocal parts (depending on the need). Visit our website at the following link to find current song selections and available vocal parts:

<http://www.thetuningnote.com/spiritwings/SWCmaterials.html>

We also have a database-driven web site, which provides....

You will need the following to access this site:

Username: spiritwings / Password: ccm

- ♪ Choir Dues: Our choir collects dues from its members every month. These dues are used for various purposes, which is decided by the choir. Five dollars (\$5) is requested at the beginning of each month. Please give your payment directly to our choir Treasurer. Remember to place your dues in the envelope that has been prepared for you. It will be returned to you with a receipt for your records. Money collected from dues goes into a Choir Account and will be used only for choir related purchases. Choir members are free to pay dues in advance and according to one's ability.

Any choir-related purchases made by an individual for the choir must be pre-approved by the Choir Board if reimbursement is expected.

- ♪ New and returning choir members (from a leave of absence) may be required to attend three (3) consecutive rehearsals prior to singing on a Sunday. This is to ensure parts are learned in time for the next performance.

III. Choir Decorum

Rehearsals

Each choir member is expected to conduct themselves in a respectable manner during rehearsals. This would include the following:

- Paying close attention to instruction
- Having trust in your directors, but feeling open to ask questions at an appropriate time, while asking in a respectful manner.
- Have trust in your fellow choir members...we're all here to learn and there is a process for learning parts as a section and songs as a whole choir. Let the process have a chance to work. So please be patient when the director is working with another section. You can often learn a lot from hearing and watching others...for example, the phrasing will often be the same between the different sections.
- Please...no coaching or correcting of fellow choir members! If there are section issues, please bring them to the attention of your choir director directly without naming names. Even if your intention is to kid someone in your section, you don't know how they would truly feel to be 'called out'.
- Please...save negative comments about an arrangement or parts to yourself and feel free to approach your directors before or after a rehearsal. It does much more harm than good to speak under your breath to a fellow choir member about such things...it is non-productive, is disruptive to the choir member you're speaking to, and can be detrimental to those around you who may hear your comments. Our time is short during rehearsals - let's make the best of it!
- Please practice your parts. We do not have time to start from scratch by reviewing all parts at every rehearsal. (7/29/13)

Stage Presence

- The choir is part of our Music Ministry and we want to represent God well, and represent our church community well. This becomes especially true with the inclusion of our livestream congregation.
- Suggestions for attire are welcome, but please be accepting of the final decisions of your directors. Please trust your directors that they've done this before and have your best interests at heart. ☺
- If seated on stage, please remember to conduct yourselves properly depending on what you're wearing (e.g., legs closed).
- Please take care of any robes or stoles used, as a great deal of time has gone into keeping them clean or even making them by hand!

IV. Officers and Officer Duties*

PRESIDENT:

Is the representative and spokesperson for the choir in the church and outside, on behalf of the choir director; convenes meetings and interfaces with the Senior Minister, other choir officers (vice-president, treasurer and secretary), and section leaders; verifies the minutes supplied by the secretary; ensures that everything that comes out of the meetings in the way of proposals has been duly discussed with the choir representatives, and that a consensus has been reached (e.g. plans for traveling).

VICE PRESIDENT:

Oversees and/or delegates choir social activities as needed; interfaces with the president, choir director and section leaders; represents for the choir president in his/her absence.

SECRETARY:

Notifies the choir of meetings; takes minutes at all officer meetings, and choir meetings; reports directly to the President; maintains choir roster.

TREASURER:

Keeps the accounting of any funds from concerts, fundraisers, dues, etc. and produces financial reports to the officers.

HISTORIAN:

Takes photographs and maintains an album for posterity and maintains a library of Sunday performances of Spirit Wings Choir (via CDs); keeps track of repertoire from performances so the choir produces a variety of songs.

V. Section Leader Responsibilities*

- Reports to Choir Officers, Choir Director and Music Director
- Coordinates & Facilitates section rehearsals
- Liaison (communicator) between their section and Music Director and Choir Director
- Assures everyone in section has needed music
- Encourages section members to record parts as needed
- Sets an example for choir decorum in rehearsals and with stage presence

VI. Process for Officer Elections/Appointments*

When applicable, officer elections are to be held each January. The process would involve taking nominations at one rehearsal, then voting at the next.

*Note: Officer and Section Leader positions may depend on the current make up of the choir, including number of choir members.

VII. Choir Committees

1. Social Events

Our choir has enjoyed time together outside the church and there may be a different set of members handling each event as they come up. We encourage everyone to participate in extra events as they may come up, which helps build a closeness within the choir which can lead to an even greater unified sound.

2. Marketing

Various events may require volunteer time, including selling tickets after services, putting up posters, distributing fliers, etc. All are encouraged to do what they can to help promote our choir and music ministry.

VIII. Spirit Wings Choir Input Form (*optional: to be used annually*)

I. How can we make Spirit Wings Choir a more positive experience?

A. Directors

B. Officers

C. Band

D. Songs

E. Fundraisers

F. Choir Members

IX. SWC Calendar (2013-2014) *

2013

August 15	3rd Annual Interfaith Night of Music and the Spoken Word
August 25	9am and 11am Services
September 29	9am and 11am Services (note: this is the 5th Sunday)
October 27	9am and 11am Services
November 24	9am and 11am Services
December 13	Annual Christmas Concert “Hallelujah, It’s A Swingin’ Christmas!”
December 22	9am and 11am Services

Note: Additional Services/Events to be announced (e.g., Burning Bowl Service)

2014

April 13	Palm Sunday
April 20	Easter Sunday

* Note: Extra rehearsals will be scheduled for certain events (e.g., Easter Service, Christmas Concert)

X. Choir Roster

<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone (cell or noted)</u>	<u>E-mail Address</u>
<u>Directors (Dept of Music and Performing Arts: 916-368-3950, ext. 229)</u>		
Chet Chwalik	916-709-1176	chet@chwalik.com
Rev. Charles Cooper	916-804-7041	pianoimages@att.net
<u>Sopranos</u>		
Andrea Mack	916-973-1252 (home)	msmack71@hotmail.com
Edith Crawford	916-955-2889 (home)	
<i>Ida Overton</i>	916-529-5632	
<i>Jade Walker</i>		
Kim McKean	916-	
Linda Quinteros	916-	
Mary Rupp	916-	
Sandra Stoner	913-558-0592	
Theresa McGarry	707-685-7778	
<u>Altos</u>		
Aimee Dour-Smith	916-284-2704	
Annette Wood	916-705-8664	
Cyndy Bennett	916-727-3412	
Emma Rose	(contact Susan or Steve)	
<i>Jamila</i>		
Lori Kendrick	916-600-1005	
Lydia Overton	916-544-7715	
Misha Parker	916-646-0531 (home)	
Nancy Benoit	916-215-0696	
<u>Tenors</u>		
Claudette Mosley	916-834-8691	
Jamel Johnson	916-410-3838	
Keith Patterson	916-	
Lorraine Brown	916-429-7749	
<i>Rolanda</i>		
Sallie Overman	916-	
Shyrlee Freeman	916-427-5804	
Susan Koller	916-	
<i>Steve Cook</i>	916-	
Wade Brynelson	916-	
<u>Basses</u>		
David DeMario	916-	
Jahi		
Robert Hampton, Sr.	916-	
Tommy McDonald	916-	

XI. Music Ministry Evaluation Checklist

Here's a really good evaluation checklist prepared by Melissa Broome, liturgy director at the [Cathedral Basilica of Saint Joseph](#) in San José, for music ministers and choir directors. Permission is granted by the author to reprint this for your own music ministries.

I. Quality of Worship Aid

- Does the community have access to participate fully in the music being sung?
- Is the program professionally made (e.g., capitalizations and spelling are correct)?

II. Quality of Blend of Choir

- Are the voices blended as one or do individual voices stick out?
- Is the choir on pitch? Is one section better than others?

III. Quality of Congregational Singing

- Is the assembly singing?
- Is the music simple enough for them to join in?
- Is the majority of the music familiar to the community, or is it all new?

IV. Tempo of Music

- Is the music too slow? Is the choir having a hard time breathing? Is the choir being forced sharp or flat because the phrases are too long? Are they able to sing a complete thought without needing multiple breaths in between?
- Is the tempo too fast? Is the assembly unable to follow along because they cannot keep up with the pace of the music?

V. Quality of Diction

- Can text be understood, especially during the psalm?

VI. Quality of Cut-Offs

- Does the choir end phrases at the same time?
- Are final consonants together and crisp? Or is there a trail of final consonants? (e.g., t-t-t-t)

VII. Quality of Cantor

- Are the musical entrances for the assembly clear? Can the assembly see that they are being encouraged to sing?
- Does the cantor have a pleasant demeanor, or do they look nervous or unfocused?
- Can text be understood?

VIII. Quality of Rehearsal Time

- Is time during rehearsal well organized? Does the director know exactly which piece will be next and move to it quickly, or is the choir waiting for music to be distributed or prepared before moving on?
- Does the rehearsal include a spiritual component, a time for the choir to gather in prayer and blend hearts, not just voices?