

Sanctuary Choir Guidelines

2017-2018

Welcome to the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church Sanctuary Choir. Comprised of about 70 singers, the Sanctuary Choir sings most Sunday mornings from the beginning of September to mid-June. Rehearsals are held Thursday evenings from 7:00-9:00 p.m. To join the Sanctuary Choir, all that is required is a vocal interview with the director.

The Sanctuary Choir Mission Statement

Our mission is:

**To glorify our creator God and our Lord Jesus Christ through the gift of music
To uplift and enrich congregational life and worship at BMPC
To foster Christian fellowship, love, and the sharing of musical gifts with each other
and our neighbors throughout the world**

About the Sanctuary Choir

The Sanctuary Choir sings more than 40 services each season, presenting over 90 anthems, from Bach to Brubeck. In addition, the choir typically presents two major concerts with orchestra each season in the Vespers series. Past seasons have included Verdi's *Requiem*, Berlioz's *Te Deum*, Mozart's *C minor Mass*, Brahms' *Requiem*, Barber's *Prayers of Kierkegaard*, and Dave Brubeck's *La Fiesta de la Posada*, with the composer at the piano. Committed to new choral works, the choir has presented the world premiers of works by John Conahan, Edward Landin, Craig Phillips, Tina Davidson, Alice Jordan, Amy Scurria, Rob Maggio, Jonathan Trumbull, and Jeffrey Brillhart, to name a few.

Seasoned travelers, the choir has toured Russia, Northern Ireland, Great Britain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Brazil, Cuba, South Africa, the Southern United States, and Germany.

The Sanctuary Choir has been featured at the national conventions of the American Choral Director's Association (1999) and The Hymn Society of America (1988). In January 2003, the Sanctuary Choir made its debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra, under the direction of Bobby McFerrin.

Important Numbers/Addresses

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
625 Montgomery Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010
Phone: 610-525-2821
Fax: 610-525-9476
Website: www.bmpc.org

Sanctuary Choir Staff

Jeffrey Brillhart, Director of Music and Fine Arts
610-525-2821 x. 8834
Jeffrey398@aol.com

Edward Landin, Assistant Director of Music
610-525-2821 x. 8837
EdwardLandin@bmpc.org

Stephanie Speakman, Fine Arts Manager
610-525-2821 x. 8836
StephanieSpeakman@bmpc.org

Choir Member Responsibilities

Choir Commitment

Choir members are expected to commit to sing during Sunday services and to maintain that commitment throughout the year. At the beginning of the choir season, we ask that you put your commitment in writing. Please fill out or update your registration form and mail it to church or put it in Stephanie's envelope in the rehearsal room to indicate your participation for the program year.

Music

The music librarian distributes music. Check before each rehearsal for new music. You are responsible for your music until it has been returned and received by the librarian. You may be charged for any music that you do not return. Your music should be marked in PENCIL only. NEVER use a pen, highlighter, or marker. Do not "borrow" music that has been assigned to another choir member; if you need a piece of music, speak to the librarian.

Usually music is collected as soon as it has been performed unless the director says otherwise. On Sunday mornings, music is collected in the loft.

Robes

Women's choir robes are stored in the closets in FAC Room A, where the kitchen and women's restroom are located. Men's choir robes are stored in FAC Room C, where the men's restroom is located.

Be careful to ensure that you have selected the correct robe prior to a service and that it is returned to its proper numerical sequence in the robe closet before you leave. Your robe and stole can be washed in cold water and hung to dry. Robes are assigned by the robe coordinator.

Attendance

Regular attendance at all rehearsals, warm-ups, and services is a critical part of your commitment to the choir. When a conflicting obligation requires that you miss a rehearsal or service, please sign out in advance in the "sign-out" book. The sign-out book is kept on the table next to the music storage cabinets. If a conflict arises unexpectedly, you may contact your section captain, or call the fine arts department office during office hours at 610-525-2821 x. 8836. Please note that messages left on the church office voicemail over the weekend will not be received until Monday. For last minute Sunday absences, call Jeff's cell phone: 610-639-5515.

Section captains will take rehearsal and service attendance. If you miss four consecutive weeks of rehearsals and services without prior notification, it will be assumed that you have voluntarily dropped your choir membership. Reinstatement will require a vocal interview with the director. A leave of absence for up to one year may be granted following a consultation with the choir director. A successful vocal interview with the choir director will be necessary for your return.

Newly auditioned members must attend a rehearsal before singing in a service.

Rehearsal/Warm-up

Thursday rehearsals begin **promptly at 7:00 p.m.** (or earlier if specified on the choir schedule). Singers are expected to be IN PLACE and READY TO SING at the starting time. Allow time before that to check for new music and check the seating chart to confirm where you sit. Please remember to wear your name tag at every rehearsal.

If you miss two consecutive Thursday rehearsals, you may not sing on the following Sunday since you will not have had sufficient preparation time for the scheduled anthems. Any exceptions to this rule are solely at the discretion of the director. Even if you have signed out for a particular Sunday, you should plan to attend the rehearsal the previous Thursday since music for future Sundays and other events will also be rehearsed. Sunday morning warm-ups are essential preparation for the worship service but do not replace a Thursday rehearsal.

Sunday warm-ups begin at **9:00 in the choir loft**. Plan to arrive at church earlier and be seated in the loft by start time. For special services or events, check the calendar for warm-up times.

Other Important Information

Communications:

Soundings: *Soundings*, the fine arts department's weekly newsletter, is distributed electronically every Monday. If you would like to submit information to be included in *Soundings*, please email submissions to Stephanie (the Fine Arts Manager) at StephanieSpeakman@bmipc.org. The deadline for submissions is Thursday by noon.

Rehearsal Order: Each Wednesday, Stephanie sends out an email listing music to be worked on for that week's rehearsal in order. Put music in order before rehearsal begins.

Emergency Cancellation Procedures: If a rehearsal must be cancelled due to inclement weather or for some other reason, Stephanie will send out an email to everyone on the email list. A message will also be posted on the website if the entire building closes due to weather. Singers without access to email will receive a telephone call. If in doubt, feel free to call the fine arts department office (610-525-2821 x. 8836). If the church switchboard is closed, you will hear a recorded announcement of cancellations.

Sunday Service Parking

Parking for Sunday BMPC activities is available at Harcum College and the Baldwin School. The Harcum lot, located behind the building that is directly across Montgomery Avenue from BMPC, is accessible from Pennswood Road (near the railroad bridge) or Montgomery Avenue; both entrances are marked by a purple Harcum sign. The Baldwin lot, which is located behind the main Baldwin building, can be accessed from Radnor Street (the road behind BMPC). If you are physically able to walk the distance from either the Harcum lot or the Baldwin lot, please use one of these parking areas on Sunday mornings so that those who are less mobile can park closer to the church. Be careful crossing Montgomery Avenue when the crossing guard is not present!

Choir Loft Procedures

The service begins with the prelude. While in the choir loft prior to or following a service, please maintain a sense of reverence. Out of respect for fellow worshipers in the congregation and in the loft, refrain from talking, whispering, or shuffling papers. This includes the time during the prelude and the postlude, as it can be very distracting to the organist. If you must leave or enter the choir loft during the service please create as little disturbance as possible.

Food and Drink

Neither drink nor food is allowed in the choir loft.

Hymn Singing

Unless a hymn is set in unison or unless requested to sing all verses in unison by the director, the choir should sing the first and last verses in unison and the remaining verses in parts.

Perfumes and scents

In consideration of other choir members, especially those with allergies, do not use any perfume or perfumed cosmetics, cologne, scented hair spray, shaving lotions, or other scented products when you are rehearsing or singing with the choir.

Publicity and Ticket Sales for Concerts

We have found that one of the most successful forms of publicity for our concerts is word of mouth publicity generated by the performers themselves. You are encouraged to tell your families, friends, and neighbors about the musical offerings at BMPC. Your reward is a full and responsive audience of people coming to hear the music that you will work hard to prepare throughout the year. You may also be asked to sell tickets to any ticketed event planned for the year.

Sunshine Fund

The choir maintains an account called the Sunshine Fund which is used for social events and to reach out to choir members who are ill, recuperating, or to express sympathy at the loss of a family member. If you become aware of a member in need of a caring gesture, contact the Member Care Coordinator, Ellen Anderson or the Fine Arts Manager, Stephanie Speakman, and respond to the person in need.

As the words of the hymn in the Fine Arts Window say:

***When in our Music God is Glorified
And adoration leaves no room for pride
It is as though the whole creation cried
Alleluia***