

First Presbyterian Children's Choir

2024-2025
Handbook



Children's Music Ministry Coordinator: Susan Orgain



LEADERS
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Hymns For A Lifetime



Our children's desire to use the hymnals (that we literally have stored in the choir room) prompted me to engage them in a conversation about the pros and cons of using hymnals in worship. Their insight was fascinating and impressive! I also became aware of what they do not (but want to) know about reading hymns, following the stanzas, and singing parts.

To address their interest and enthusiasm (and maybe yours, too!), we have set a goal to teach the choristers 20 hymns this year. The children will have the opportunity to work on a set group of hymns in a prescribed order. They will be challenged to memorize 1 verse of each hymn.

After "passing off" 10 hymns choristers will receive a silver "Hymns for a Lifetime" ribbon.

After "passing off" 20 hymns choristers will receive a gold "Hymns for a Lifetime" ribbon.

We will be singing the hymns in choir rehearsals, and we will provide music for children to use at home. Please remember that this is a completely voluntary activity. No one is required to participate.



Please see more information and a wonderful video link on page 9 of this handbook.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are delighted that your child is interested in being a part of the **First Presbyterian Church Children's Choir program** this year! Being in choir is a wonderful opportunity for children to grow together through music. Our choir is open to children in kindergarten-fifth grade.

Please make sure to read through this entire handbook to familiarize yourself with the guidelines for this group. The Children's Choir handbook is also available on the church's website: www.1stpres.com

Our first rehearsal date is Wednesday, August 28, 2024.

If you have any questions about choir, please feel free to contact Susan Orgain at susano@1stpres.com. We're looking forward to a great year of music making!

Sincerely,
Susan Orgain

**An important "Save the Date" for 2nd-5th graders
-Children's Choir Festival-**


 choristersguild
 Richmond
 2709 Monument Ave
 Richmond, VA 23220

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR
 FESTIVAL NOVEMBER
 16, 2024
 8:30-12:30**

Richmond's First Baptist
 Church
 2709 Monument Ave
 Richmond, VA 23220

CHOIR Practice

Children's Choir rehearsals are held **every Wednesday evening from 5:50-6:30pm** (unless otherwise stated). Rehearsals are held in the choir room located on the third floor of building A. If a rehearsal is cancelled for any reason, parents will be notified in advance through email. A full list of rehearsal dates can be found on page 8 of this handbook.

Children should arrive at or before 5:50pm on Wednesdays. Please refrain from bringing food and drink into rehearsal spaces. **Rehearsals begin promptly at 5:50pm**. Once rehearsal starts, choristers will not be permitted to leave the choir room without an adult until 6:30pm. Children attending Mountain Top Kids will go as a group after rehearsal.

Attendance



Children's Choir is an important activity and a great service to our congregation. It is a leadership role in worship; therefore, it is crucial that children are present at all rehearsals and worship services. That being said, it is understandable that conflicts do come up. **If your child/children cannot attend a rehearsal or performance, please send Susan an email as soon as possible. We will be concerned and check with you if someone doesn't show up.**

Choir Guidelines and Behavior

1. Always sing your best and listen to directions.
2. Refrain from talking while adults are talking.
3. Always get permission before playing any instruments including the piano.
4. Come directly to your rehearsal room when you leave your parents.
5. Be on your best behavior during worship services and concerts.

Worship Service Attire

Choristers are encouraged to have black bottoms (slacks, skirts, leggings) and a white top when we sing in the sanctuary. Most of the time the children will be wearing robes. You will be notified if the attire is different for a special occasion.

Worship Service Procedures

On the following two pages you will find our entire worship leadership and rehearsal date schedules for the 2024-2025 choir season. If there are any changes to the schedules, parents will be **notified by email** with the details.

Children's Choir sings for worship about once a month.

Normally children will need to arrive in the sanctuary by 8:30.

*If you are already aware of conflicts with any of the dates on the following pages, please let us know at your earliest convenience.

Children's Choir Dates

2024-2025 school year

DATE/EVENT	TIME	LOCATION
August 28 FIRST REHEARSAL!	5:50	Choir room
September 15 9:30 service	8:30	Sanctuary
October 20 9:30 service	8:30	Sanctuary
November 15-16 Richmond Festival	3:30 Friday - 6:00 Saturday	Richmond, Va.
November 17 9:30 service	8:30	Sanctuary
Sat. Dec. 14 extra rehearsal December 15 9:30 service and 11:00 service	Morning tbd 8:30	Sanctuary
December 24 Christmas Eve	4:00	Worship center
February 16 9:30 service	8:30	Sanctuary
March 23 9:30 service	8:30	Sanctuary
April 13 Palm Sunday 9:30 service	8:30	Sanctuary
April 23 Video recording session	5:50	Choir room
May 4 9:30 service	8:30	Sanctuary

Rehearsal Dates:



(Wednesday evenings: 5:50-6:30)

August 28

September 4
 September 11
 September 18
 September 25

October 2
 October 9
 October 16
 October 23
 October 30

November 6
 November 13
 November 20

December 4
 December 11
 December 14 (extra rehearsal)

January 8
 January 15
 January 22
 January 29

February 5
 February 12
 February 19
 February 26

March 5
 March 19
 March 26

April 9
 April 16
 April 23
 April 30



I have read numerous articles and watched numerous videos trying to determine if indeed it would be a good idea to emphasize hymnody with our Children's Choir. Here are a few of the excerpts that led me to a resounding "YES", it is worth the time and effort. We just need to make it fun!

1) Importance of Hymns in the Church | History of the Hymns | Hymns of our Faith

This is an excellent video by the author of "Then Sings My Soul". We will be using hymns and stories from the collections he discusses!

https://youtu.be/V8y_BdoolmQ?si=9czDZhyQjoCbQDde

(copy and paste the link)

2) "Hymns are important for worship because they are designed for congregational singing"

Hymns are not designed for soloists. They are not designed for easy listening. They are not for entertainment. And they are not even designed for quiet introspective worship. The purpose of a hymn is for congregational singing. To that end, the hymn serves three functions:

1. Hymns are used to adore and worship God.
2. Hymns are sung as prayers in that they address God directly.
3. Hymns declare Truth. "

[What is a Hymn and Why Are Hymns Important In Worship? - \(authenticworship.org\)](http://authenticworship.org)

3) "Hymns unite generations of Christian people. With all the technological connections at our fingertips, it's ironic that we live in a society in which we are horribly disconnected from basic human interaction. When we sing hymns in our churches, we are uniting with those around us in a fantastically corporate, sensory experience. When we sing hymns of the past, we share in faith with those who have gone before us.

The modern church tends to behave as if the crucifixion happened sometime in the mid-90s, as if Tom Brokaw interrupted a first-season Friends episode to break the news. Both of these extremes are toxic. All worship is historic because it recalls the creative and redemptive acts of God. All worship is contemporary, because we're doing it now. All worship is in the future, because it foretells the coming resurrection, when the curse will be broken, and all will be set aright.

Until then, we come together as God's people, singing, speaking, preaching, and praying the old, old story, so that we might be remade further into Christ's likeness. Hymn-singing auto-corrects the blind spots in our modern faith understandings. By allowing the witnesses of previous generations into our worship, we are presented with a more complete picture of what it means to be a person of faith in our own time. And along with new hymns of our own creation, we pass on the faith of the saints who've gone before to our children and children's children.

For too long now, hymn-singing has been left as just another cold dessert choice in the worship cafeteria. Just for those of "a certain age." Just for those who "desire more tradition in their worship experience." It's time those days were over. It's time to teach our churches how to sing hymns once again. Before it's too late, and the rich tradition is gone for good."

[9 Reasons Every Church Needs To Sing Hymns | Jonathan Aigner \(patheos.com\)](#)