

First Presbyterian Children's Choir

2025-2026

Handbook



Children's Music Ministry Coordinator: Susan Orgain



LEADERS
Mary Gonzales
Ginny Nagy
Edye Swab





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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, September 3, 2025.

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



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.

An important "Save the Date" for 2nd-5th graders -Children's Choir Festival- November 14-15

Children and Youth Choir Festival (Grades 2-12)
Presented by: the Richmond Chapter of Choristers Guild
Children's Choir (Grades 2-5)
Youth Choir (Grades 6-12)

Conductors:

Children's Choir Conductor: Karol Kimmell



Karol served as the Director of Youth & Children's Music at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Atlanta, GA since 1998, directing and developing choral and handbell choirs for PreK - 12th grade. There, she co-directed Lutheridge Music Week in Arden, NC, planned the week's innovative worship, and served as the choral clinician for PreK-2nd grade.

Before All Saints', Karol worked for 15 years as an organist, choir director, and pre-school music teacher in NC, SC, and GA in Lutheran, Episcopal, and Presbyterian congregations and schools. Karol directed the Elementary Choruses at Atlanta's Paideia School and the North Carolina 2009 Sixth Grade All State Chorus. Her articles, anthem studies, and hymn

arrangements appear in The Chorister and Augsburg Fortress' Sundays and Seasons and Prelude.

Karol in demand as a choral clinician across the U.S, and is co-director each summer at the Choristers Guild Institute. She has presented workshops for the National Conference for Sacred Music, Georgia ACDA, Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, FUMMWA, and Augsburg Fortress. She has served as a choral clinician for Youth Lutherans Sing, Lake Junaluska, Massanetta Springs, Bonclarken, Mabel Boyter Choir Camp, and regional choral festivals. Karol attended Wittenberg University and Lenoir-Rhyne University, receiving her BME (organ) from Lenoir-Rhyne. She is certified in Orff Schulwerk, Kindermusik, Musicgarten, studied voice at the Mannes School of Music and sang with the Riverside Church Choir in NYC.

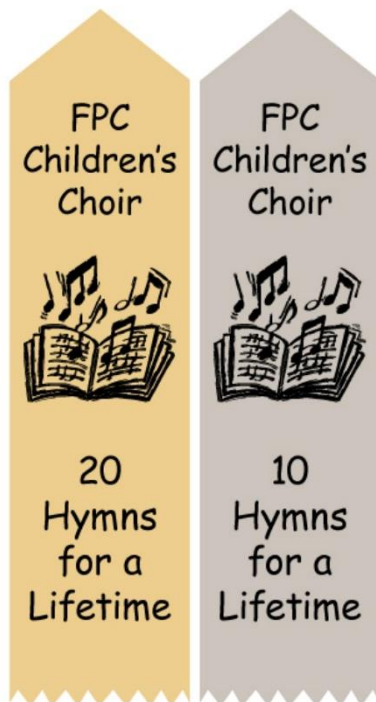
Youth Choir Conductor: Daniel Banke



Daniel Banke is the Director of Music and Worship at Reveille UMC in Richmond, VA, where he directs the Chancel Choir, Youth Choir, and Reveille Ringers. He also guides the weekly worship planning team and oversees the leaders of a fully graded music ministry for youth and children. After growing up in Georgia, Daniel received a Bachelor of Music Education from Samford University and a Master of Music in choral conducting from the University of North Texas. He also received a Master of Arts in Christian Practice from Duke Divinity School.

Before leading the music ministry at Reveille, Daniel served in a similar capacity at Caswell Springs UMC in Mississippi, and First UMC in Gainesville, Texas. He is actively involved with Choristers Guild and The Fellowship of Worship Artists. When not making music or coordinating worship at Reveille, Daniel and his wife Claire enjoy traveling, camping, and taking in the vibrant performing arts scene in Richmond.

Hymns For A Lifetime



We are making some adjustments to continue our “Hymns for a Lifetime” program during the 2025/26 choir season. Last year many choristers received a silver ribbon acknowledging their work to memorize the first verse of 10 hymns.

To continue helping the children grow in their knowledge of the faith through hymnody, we will feature 2 hymns each month. We will sing the hymns in choir rehearsals and provide music for children to practice at home. Each chorister has a card in the choir room to keep track of complete hymns. We are planning to “pass off” each month’s 2 hymns as a group likely on the last

Wednesday of the month. Please remember that this is a completely voluntary activity. No one is required to participate.

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 2025-2026 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

2025-2026 school year

DATE/EVENT	TIME	LOCATION
September 3 FIRST REHEARSAL!	5:50	Choir room
September 28 9:30 service	8:30	Sanctuary
November 14-15 Richmond Festival	3:30 Friday - 6:00 Saturday	Richmond, Va.
November 16 9:30 service	8:30	Sanctuary
Sat. Dec. 20 extra rehearsal December 21 9:30 service and 11:00 service	Morning tbd 8:30	Sanctuary
December 24 Christmas Eve	4:00	Worship center
February 15 9:30 service	8:30	Sanctuary
March 29 Palm Sunday 9:30 and 11:00 service	8:30	Sanctuary
April 19 9:30 service	8:30	Sanctuary
April 22 Video recording session	5:50	Choir room

Rehearsal Dates:



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

September 3
September 10
September 17
September 24

January 7
January 14
January 21
January 28

October 1
October 8
October 15
October 22
October 29

February 4
February 11
February 18
February 25

November 5
November 12
November 19

March 4
March 18
March 25

December 3
December 10
December 17
December 20 (extra rehearsal)

April 1
April 8
April 15
April 22