

Dear Parents of Children from 4 years through 6th grade,

September 3, 2004

Our fall choir semester will begin on **Wednesday, September 15**. I can't wait! Our wonderful STAFF:
Renee Parker, Kelly DeSoto, Choir I
Karen Kraemer, Choirs II and III
Billie Jean Brister, Playground/gym
Nancy Vernon, Accompanist, Coordinator
Jim Cheyne, Handbell assistant

HOW to do Children's Choir at FUMC!

We want your child to be safe. Therefore, the following guidelines must be followed:

DROP-OFF When: 3:30 - 4 p.m. Where: read below

~During PRETTY fall and spring weather, you may drop your child off at the alley entrance to the children's playground. (Enter the alley from D Street.) At 4 p.m. they will travel as a group to Bayliss Hall (Choirs II and III) and Apostles' Playhouse (Choir I), so be CERTAIN that you arrive before 4 p.m.

~During cold, dark weather, drop your child at the 16th street entrance to the FLC. The children will gather in the gym. **TO REPEAT:** They will travel as a group to Bayliss Hall and Apostles' Playhouse at 4 p.m., so be CERTAIN that you arrive before 4 p.m.

PICK-UP When: Choir I - 5 p.m. Choirs II & III - 5:30 p.m. Where: read below

~ You may pick your child up on the ALLEY side of the playground during good weather.

~ You may pick your child up at the 16th Street door to the Family Life Center during cold, dark weather.

~Ideally, each parent should come INTO the gym to get their child, but I know this is hard sometimes. HOWEVER, the adult choir assistant should SEE the parent before allowing the child to exit to the car. North 16th is a heavily traveled street. Do not allow your child to cross it unattended!!!

~Bayliss Hall for Choirs II and III, Apostle's Playhouse (2nd floor Rotation SS Room) for Choir I and the Sanctuary (when we practice in there) are the ONLY areas of the main church building where your child should be. We travel in groups with an adult. However, your help is needed to impress upon your child the importance of staying with the group.

~Kenny Martin, one of our helpful custodians, will be at the exits at 5:00 and 5:30 p.m. each Wednesday. He will be directing traffic and assisting pedestrians in crossing. Kenny is there to HELP!

No child should ever be on the B Street or 15th Street sides of the church!

ALL Vehicular traffic should be slow and cautious.

NOTE:

ALL CHOIR and GYM ACTIVITIES END AT 5:30 p.m. CHILDREN ARE TO BE PICKED UP THEN. THERE WILL BE NO STAFFING AFTER 5:40 p.m. UNLESS PARENTS NOTIFY THE CHURCH OF AN EMERGENCY. The custodian on duty may always be reached at 459-5060.

→ All choir participants who have older siblings involved until 5:30 may remain until 5:30.

→ At 5:00 p.m. Choir I singers leave unless there is an older sibling in another choir.

→ Siblings who are *NOT* choir participants should be on the playground or in the gym ONLY under the supervision of a parent.

Thank you for supporting your children's service to their church!

Any parent is welcome to visit choir or handbells at any time.

We NEED other volunteers, particularly if you play the piano or read music! Please call and volunteer!

If you would like to volunteer as a CHOIR HELPER, call 782-5068 and leave Nancy Vernon a voice mail.

During the first several weeks, we particularly need an assistant or assistants with Handbells Choir I.

We occasionally need a substitute for the playground/gym arrival and leaving times, and for special art projects.

WHY I BELIEVE CHILDREN'S CHOIR IS IMPORTANT. . . .

**IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ! PARENTS PLEASE READ! IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ!
ONCE MORE WITH FEELING**

Some of you have read these thoughts of mine for several years, so I thought about rewriting them in a different way. However, these words say exactly what I feel, so . . . despite the repetition, please read the following carefully. Your children and mine are bombarded with opportunities to participate in so many activities. I respect your role in helping them choose wisely. Therefore, I want to share with you my beliefs and goals for our choir program and for your child.

The things I want your children to learn from their choir experience are:

1. How very important they and their work are to God and His plan for the world and our church NOW;
2. That ALL their many talents come from God and that God expects them to be used in His service;
3. That each person is unique, has a unique combination of talents and is loved and forgiven equally by God;
4. That all Christians are commissioned by God to witness, and to "do" their faith;
5. How to sing, speak, dance, act, paint and play instruments to the very best of their God-given ability, and that this process always, always requires hard work and persistence;
6. That hard work and persistence are always "worth it";
7. How to work with peers and adults to accomplish a common goal with enthusiasm and vigor, but with respect and forgiveness for everyone.
8. How to sing joyfully and gratefully to God for our many, many blessings.

These things could not be taught, nor could they be learned, without the children's actually serving God and this church in the process. In that service, I sincerely hope that we are creating wonderful memories of their "growing-up time" in this great church. I want them to have such a solid sense of belonging and importance to their church during these first years, that when they reach those stormy, questioning years, they will have a lighthouse of belief inside themselves that will shine and shine and shine. Never question if that sense of importance is real; in this program it is VERY real! Each child is needed and wanted, each child will be an important contributor and each child will learn from both the limelight and the wings!

In view of the important work that we must accomplish in God's service this semester, I will say (like ANY good coach), I expect them to be at practice! My children have participated in sports, just like yours have. The best coaches have HIGH EXPECTATIONS that players would not dream of violating! So does GOD and as His designated worker, so do I!

Therefore, the most important expectations for choir are:

1. Be at practice. We never waste your child's time. Come see--you are invited to choir rehearsal anytime!
2. Do not be late--a team cannot function at its peak until all its members are present. Tardiness to handbells is especially inappropriate and cannot be tolerated. Excessive tardiness to handbells will result in lost opportunities to play with the choir.
3. Disrespectful or unkind behavior toward any child or adult will not be tolerated. I love exuberance and vigor! However, persons who are disruptive or out of control rob the group of too much valuable time.
4. Believe in your child's work! Let him/her know that you realize that "Choir" is divided into different times, work and play. The work is very necessary and must be done and CAN BE FUN! I think children are just as focused by having specific goals as are adults.

We will sing in the 10:50 service in early October, early November and present our annual re-enactment of Christ's birth on Sunday evening, December 5 in the sanctuary at 7 p.m. WE HAVE MUCH TO DO!
No pre-registration is necessary!

CHOIR IS COMING!!!!!!

Sincerely,

→ NOTE: In order to ring in HANDBELLS, one must also SING in choir.