

Soli Deo Gloria: *glory to God alone*

Sanctuary Choir Handbook
2023–2024



Friends,

In our music ministry, we want to exalt God and edify people by presenting creative offerings that reflect the highest level of human preparation and divine empowerment. Week by week, we offer to the Lord excellence in traditional worship.

Our adult choir is a vital part of the music ministry and has the joy of leading our church in worship. The choir is composed of men and women who have sensed God's calling to lead our church in worship.

I want our adult choir to meet three distinct needs in your life:

Musical—We strive for musical excellence and focus on giving our utmost for His highest.

Spiritual—We want to help you grow in your knowledge of and love for Christ.

Relational—We hope that you will make lifelong friendships in the choir; we care for you and want to be your extended family.

There is an exciting sense of destiny that is developing in our ministry. I believe that in the coming years, we will experience the heights and depths of transcendent worship and become a close community of believers who strive to make His praise glorious.

Our theme is Soli Deo Gloria, meaning "glory to God alone."

We believe that we have been called to serve God through our adult choir. We have responded to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who has summoned us to serve at this time, in this place, in this specific ministry.

Therefore, we will be faithful and diligent in fulfilling our duties. We will joyfully serve with our whole heart. We will strive to do well and serve with excellence. Week by week, we want to sense that God is pleased with our work and ministry.

Therefore, please take your commitment to the choir seriously. Leading worship is a high calling and great honor.

God has called me to be a pastor (Ephesians 4:11), so I want to be your friend and helper. Please let me and our leadership team know how we can serve you.

Don McMinn

Choir Membership

Who can join the choir?

The choir is open to those who have graduated from high school. You do not have to be a member of our church, as long as you joyfully confess Christ as the Lord of your life.

How do I join the choir?

Contact the Music Office (Tawny Samons at 469-252-5207, email tawnys@stonebriar.org) to schedule an interview. Then, Don will contact you regarding membership and voice placement.

What happens at an interview?

Don and members of the music staff enjoy the opportunity to get to know you better and answer your questions about the choir. We will sing a familiar hymn together to determine accuracy in intonation and vocal range.

Participate or Communicate

We ask that you take your commitment to choir seriously and prioritize choir rehearsals and Sunday morning worship-leading. If you find you cannot be present with us, please communicate with Tawny (tawnys@stonebriar.org) to let us know you will be absent. Thank you for helping us by staying in touch.

What is the attendance commitment?

We ask that you maintain consistent attendance of at least 70% at all rehearsals and performances.

LOA—Leave of Absence: If you have special circumstances and need to be gone for a specific period of time, please request a leave of absence, which has a beginning and ending date. You may request a LOA for 90 days. You may surely return to us sooner than 90 days, if you are able. If your leave needs to be longer than 90 days, you may go “inactive” and rejoin at a later date.

MIA—Missing in Action: “no show, no word.” When a member does not attend Wednesday rehearsals and Sunday morning worship for several weeks in a row, we become concerned and will follow up with you. We miss you when you are absent!

How is attendance checked?

On Wednesday night, we will check you in via computer and print a name badge. The check-in stations are located in the choir room.

On Sundays, check yourself in on the clipboards in the Choir Room.

If I know I'm going to be absent from a rehearsal or Sunday, who do I tell?

Mark the Anticipated Absences clipboard (the YELLOW one) on the Choir Room counter or email Tawny Samons at tawnys@stonebriar.org. Please inform us of all anticipated absences.

What are some “rules of etiquette” that will help maintain the effectiveness of our ministry?

- **Punctuality**, especially on Sunday mornings, is important. Please be robed and seated in the loft by 8 a.m. for warm-up before the first service.
- **Fragrance free**—Out of courtesy to those with sensitivities to fragrances, please do not wear fragrances (perfumes, colognes) during rehearsals and performances.
- **Consideration**—Please be intentional about **limiting talking during all rehearsals**. We do this as a courtesy to our director and to other choir members. Thank you!
If you must wait during rehearsal while the director works with another section, please use that time as an opportunity to **listen to the director's instructions** (they may apply to you, too!) **and to study your own part** so that you are better prepared.
- **Put phones away**—Do not use electronic devices during rehearsal or on Sunday morning. If you are expecting an emergency call, please put your cell phone on silent or vibrate, and step outside the loft if you must take a call.

Exiting the Loft

- **Orderly**—When exiting the loft on Sundays after leading worship, your music folder goes on the side that will be away from the congregation when you turn to leave. Do not turn to leave until the person next to you starts to move. Move quickly and quietly through the stairwells and hallway because the people in the rooms next to the Worship Center are watching the service.
- **Quickly-yet-safely**—We want to **“exit the loft as quickly-yet-safely” as we can**. Most of you are so polite, you would not dream of passing someone who is slow when descending the stairs. We want all to be safe on the stairs, and not dangerously rush down the stairs. So please, let's follow these **BASIC TRAFFIC RULES**:
 - **SLOW ON THE RIGHT**: If you move slowly down the stairs, please move to the right-hand side of the stairwell when exiting. Take the time you need to be safe.
 - **FAST ON THE LEFT**: If you are able to comfortably and quickly exit the loft, please use the left-hand side of the stairwell when exiting.
 - **PLEASE PASS**: “Use the left lane to pass those on the right”; please regard this not as discourteous, but as a courtesy, allowing everyone to take the time they need to exit safely.

I repeat (for emphasis 😊): **Our goal is to exit the loft as quickly-yet-safely as we can!** Thanks for your help with this and your kindness to one another!

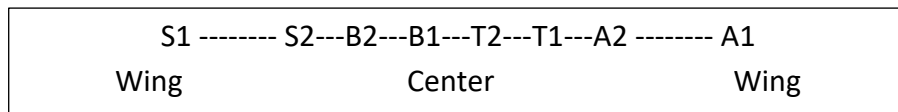
Rehearsals and Sunday Mornings

When does the choir rehearse?

We rehearse Wednesday evenings from 6:45 to 8:30 p.m. with occasional extra rehearsals for special events. We will give you ample notice of extra rehearsals. Please see calendar dates in your weekly Music Notes.

Where do I sit at rehearsals and on Sundays?

For rehearsals, sit in your section: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B). When facing the loft from left to right, S1 in wing, S2, B2, B1, T2, T1, A2, A1 in wing. The choir rehearsal room is set up like the choir loft.



On Sunday mornings, we will make last minute seating adjustments. Thank you in advance for your joyful flexibility in making necessary adjustments.

Is childcare provided during rehearsals and Sunday mornings?

Wednesday evenings: Yes, childcare is available starting at 6:15 p.m. and ending at 8 p.m.

Sunday: Yes, childcare begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends following the second worship service. Please visit the Building C check-in area to have your child assigned to their age-appropriate room.

Special Events: Occasionally, we do provide childcare for special events. Contact Tawny Samons to request childcare (tawnys@stonebriar.org, 469-252-5207).

How often does the choir sing on Sunday mornings?

The “heart of our ministry” is Sunday morning worship services.

- We sing about 40 Sundays a year.
- The choir does not sing on most holiday weekends (Labor Day, Memorial Day, July 4, Thanksgiving), and we are off during July and August. You will know these dates well in advance so you can schedule vacations and other activities.

Before the second Sunday morning worship service:

- We expect all choir members to sing during both services, with few exceptions, such as attending new member classes. For all exceptions, please inform your neighbors (whoever you sat next to during the first service) and Francey.
- Prior to the second service, please meet in the “dungeon” by 10:30 a.m.
- Please make every effort to be on time for line-up.

What is the Sunday morning schedule?

9:00 service:

- 8:00—robed and seated for rehearsal
- 8:45—devotional
- 8:50—enter the loft
- 8:55—seated in loft

10:45 service:

- 10:30—meet in the “dungeon”; adjust seating as needed
- 10:35—enter the loft
- 10:40—seated in loft

The choir leaves the loft during each service after singing. You may then go back into the service or to an adult Sunday Fellowship. If you are going to the service, you may leave your robe and folder in the Choir Hall.

May I sing on Sunday if I missed Wednesday’s rehearsal?

Yes. We rehearse songs six weeks in advance. If you miss more than two rehearsals, please refer to your Choir Notes to know which anthem we will sing on Sunday and decide for yourself whether or not you are prepared to sing.

What is the yearly schedule?

We have two semesters: Fall (September–December) and Spring (January–June). We take off two weeks after Christmas and the entire months of July and August.

Where do we store personal items on Sunday mornings?

Personal items such as purses may be locked up in the robing area of the Choir Room.

Music and Robes

You will be assigned a robe and your own rehearsal folder, performance binder, and a numbered copy of each anthem. We number the front of your anthem with your folder number so you will have your own marked copy when we repeat an anthem.

Marking Your Music

- You are encouraged to mark your music, using a pencil.
- Please **DO NOT** use ink pens or highlighters when marking music.
- Use of highlighters is permitted on photocopied music that will be thrown away after we sing the piece.

Sunday Morning Worship Packet

Every Wednesday evening, pick up a worship packet (photocopied hymns and songs) for the upcoming Sunday. At the end of rehearsal, place this packet, along with Sunday's anthems, into your Sunday binder. Please keep your binders cleaned out and current. See the rehearsal order listed in Choir Notes each week to determine what should be in your folder. Our choir librarians also post a list of upcoming anthems near the choir music cart in the robing area.

Care for facilities and materials:

- Turn in your Sunday anthems after the second service each week.
- Keep your choral folders cleaned out and current. Please do not affix your name tag to either folder.
- Cleanliness is next to godliness! Please pick up after yourself (water bottles, wrappers, tissues, and papers).

May I Take My Music Home?

Yes, but be sure to bring it back for Wednesday and Sunday.

Care of Robes

- The robes are professionally cleaned periodically. Please hang up your robe after each service. Do not lay it on your chair.
- No chewing, eating (except lozenges), drinking, going to bathroom, etc. while wearing your robe. If your robe needs repair, please sign the robe repair request clipboard in the robe room.

After Sunday Morning Worship: *In between services you may:*

- 1.) Hang your robe in the Choir Hall and join the service in the Sanctuary.
- 2.) Return to the Choir Room, hang up your robe (please do not leave it on your chair), return your binder to your assigned music slot, and go to the service or fellowship class.

3.) Ladies, the purse cabinet will be unlocked after the choir exits the loft, so remember to retrieve your purses.

After the Music of the Second Service:

- 1.) Hang your robe in the Choir Hall and join the service in the Sanctuary.
- 2.) Return to the Choir Room, hang your robe up, turn in the anthem from that morning, and go to the service or fellowship class.
- 3.) Please return all robes to the Choir Room after the second service is over.

Formal Attire

Formal attire will be worn for the Christmas program:

- Men wear black tuxes and white shirts; we will provide cranberry bow ties and cummerbunds.
- Ladies wear all black: dresses or dressy slacks, ¾ to long sleeves, and modest jewelry.

Fellowship

Wednesday Night Dinners at Stonebriar

Dinner is available on *Wednesday* nights and is served in the Atrium from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m. each week. You can register for the whole semester here: <https://stonebriar.org/e55489>, or register each Monday before midnight using the “Midweek Dinner” registration at <https://stonebriar.org/events>.

How Do I Submit a Prayer Request?

Choir Notes: Email prayer requests that you want listed in the weekly Choir Notes to Tawny Samons at tawnys@stonebriar.org by noon on Tuesday.

What Is the *Helps* Ministry of the Choir?

Our care for each choir member even extends to wanting to help you in practical ways. We have a group of volunteers who will help advise you regarding practical needs you may have—auto repairs, house repairs, etc. Sometimes, we can help take care of the issue; at other times, we will recommend a proven contractor who can help. When you have a need, contact Calvin at mrc1958@gmail.com.

Communication

What are the primary communication channels for the choir and orchestra?

1. Every Monday, Francey sends an email to all choir and orchestra members that highlights important topics.
2. Every Wednesday evening, we distribute Choir Notes that contains all pertinent weekly information. Please read these carefully.
3. Please contact the Music Office at any time. We are here to serve you.
Tawny Samons: tawnys@stonebriar.org, 469-252-5207

Additional contact information will be provided to choir members in the full Choir Handbook.