



Mount Peace
BAPTIST CHURCH
The Church Triumphant is Alive And Well!

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Music Ministry Reference Handbook

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VISION STATEMENT	4
EDUCATION AND CHURCH MUSIS MINISTRY.....	5
MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP	5
GOALS AND GENERAL GUIDELINES	6
GOALS	6
GENERAL GUIDELINES	6
MOUNT PEACE MUSICAL ENSEMBLES	7
VOICES OF PEACE	7
WOMEN’S CHORALE.....	7
PRAISE AND WORSHIP TEAM.....	7
YOUTH PRAISE & WORSHIP TEAM.....	7
MALE CHORUS	8
YOUTH/CHILDREN’S CHOIR	8
MEN’S /WOMEN’S DAY/ SEASONAL ENSEMBLES.....	8
MOUNT PEACE MUSICIANS.....	9
MUSICAL ORDER OF WORSHIP PROFILE	10
INTROIT	10
CONGREGATIONAL HYMN	10
CHORAL RESPONSE	10
MUSICAL SELECTIONS	10
OFFERING	10
MOMENTS OF MEDITATION	10
CHORAL RESPONSE	10
SERMONIC SELECTION	10
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHOIR MEMBER	11
PERSONAL CONDUCT	11
A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHURCH	11
A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD CHOIR RESPONSIBILITIES	11
EFFECTIVE MUSIC MINISTRY AND WORSHIP MUST HAVE ORDER	11
GENERAL CHOIR BASICS.....	12
WHAT SHOULD BE CUSTOMARY IN EVERY CHOIR	12
CHOIR DECORUM AND DISCIPLINE.....	13
MUSIC MINISTRY LEADERS	14
MINISTER OF MUSIC.....	14
MUSICIANS	14
CHOIR DIRECTORS	14
SOLOIST.....	14
VARIED ENSEMBLE LEADERS/SUPPORT	15
BIBLICAL REFERENCES.....	16
REVEAL THE CHARACTER OF GOD	16

GIVING THANKS 16
WITH OUR MOUTHS 16
WITH OUR HANDS 16
WITH OUR POSTURE..... 16

VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision is to uplift the church and congregation through a diverse selection of music that appeals to all generations. Every ensemble of the church strives toward musical excellence and focuses on spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ through song.

The Music Ministry Handbook is my attempt to organize and put into place a reference guide that will spotlight the Mount Peace Baptist Church (MPBC) Music Ministry. It will also give pertinent information in regards to decorum, discipline, choral spirituality and music education. In order to successfully take a look at where we are today, a look into both the past of our church in conjunction with the African Church musical tradition must be examined. This brief look into the past will help put into place what is needed today if we are to meet the needs of church people of the 21st century.

The African-American Church is the most important institution in the African-American Community. In some cases there would cease to be an African-American community without the church. For this reason the health of the church depends on the pastor and the music ministry operating in a unified fashion. It is also equally important that our music doesn't alienate any population of the church. For our church is made of the young as well as more seasoned saints.

The music of the black church has direct roots to both Africa as well as the Southern Slave trade. There has been a long oral tradition of metered hymn, spirituals, as well as freedom songs that preceded the now current written standard. These early songs both tell and describe the history of our people through music. It is very easy to imagine the slaves searching for freedom, or protesters marching during the Civil Rights movement demanding equal rights. There are hundreds of songs that canvas the period of slavery to Civil Rights. Example: *Hush, Somebody's Calling My Name, Guide My Feet, Every Time I Feel the Spirit, Come On In My Room, Fix Me Jesus, Oh Freedom, Steal Away To Jesus, Remember Me, I Shall Not Be Moved*. Howard Thurman says "The Negro Spiritual is the secret of ascendancy over circumstances and the basis of their assurances concerning life and death." Hence, it should be our duty to preserve these songs while maintaining the sacred history of our people. Once again, there has always been a strong connection with political struggle and the African American Church. **"Black Sacred Music and Social Change"**

"In Black...worship," James H. Cone says, "God is known as the Liberator of the poor and the downtrodden. God is the Almighty Sovereign One who is called a heart fixer and mind regulator. During the worship service, God is known by the immediate presence of the divine Spirit with the people, giving them not only the vision that the society must be transformed but also the power and the courage to participate in its transformation." This statement holds true for even the music ministry of the church. It is imperative that we have the power, courage and even more importantly the insight to transform from ordinary to the extraordinary. This transformation means that we must be willing to offer God our best at all times while feeding his sheep a wide variety of music. Our music ministry must be more than an influx of popular radio music. In other words we should offer the congregation a wide variety of hymns, spirituals, introits, as well as popular music.

Now that we have taken a very brief look into the music and social connections of the past, what is it that God would have us to do in the present? Along with the reintroduction of traditional hymns/spiritual songs and the teaching of new sacred material we must focus on the message of the songs we sing. Great attention must be paid to true Praise and Worship that will glorify God and bring our congregation to a stronger one-on-one relationship with Christ. How do we make this transformation or put into biblical terms, "How can we sing when we're in a strange land? How can we face adversities? We have to be willing to travel into uncharted waters. The music that we sing must begin to focus more on worship, and less on hype.

EDUCATION AND CHURCH MUSIC MINISTRY

"When you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary" (Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-education of the Negro* [Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, Inc., 1933], p. xiii).

Education has always been an important standard and goal in the Protestant church. It was viewed that the minister or leader of the flock should be trained and hold advanced degrees while also being the force to encourage and promote the body of Christ to become educated as well. During this time that education was rooted in the basics: reading, writing and arithmetic. When public education was either unavailable or inadequate the black church stepped in and served as both the religious and secular education system. It has become just as important over the years for our musicians, ministers of music and choir members to become more aware and educated in the gifts that God have already granted. What does this mean? Musicians and ministers of music must be "well trained, dedicated, loyal, competent and above all, Christian!" (James Abbingon, *Let Mt. Zion Rejoice*). Musicians must also love the church and seek to understand its history and development from the origins of Christianity to the local history of the church that they serve. This understanding will impart the knowledge that is required to successfully organize and plan intentional meaningful worship services.

Thanks to groups such as the Fisk Jubilee Singers, there was an emergence of pride for the spiritual as well as classical songs that celebrated the timbre of the black voice while show casing the mastery of reading and choral training. It is important today to train our choirs at the very least in basic musical knowledge: basic note reading, rhythm reading, and ear training. We must give our musical ensembles the tools they need to be successful at singing all styles of music. We must also educate the congregation by introducing new hymns, worship songs and yes, even biblically sound "radio" music. *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God"* (Colossians 3:16).

MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

The function of the music ministry in the church of today is to prepare the hearts of God's people for the spoken word; however it is necessary that an effective varied song service be saturated with the Word before the Pastor begins his message.

GOALS AND GENERAL GUIDELINES

GOALS

The choirs of MPBC Music Ministry aspire to:

1. Be a tithing music ministry.
2. Lead the congregation in song.
3. Be the best ambassadors of song for Christ.
4. Give 100% in rehearsal and in worship.
5. Be spirit-led and bible-fed (attend Bible Study and Church School).

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Any adult wishing to participate in any of the choirs at Mount Peace must be a disciple of the church.
2. It is desired that any disciple who chooses to participate, to include returning disciples who have been away from the choir a long period of time, should attend at least two rehearsals in order to familiarize themselves with the repertoire before singing in **any** worship service. For further clarification, please see Bro. Lyle.
3. Please be in the choir room on your designated Sunday to sing, 15 minutes prior to the start of worship.
4. Please do not talk in the choir loft and refrain from talking in the choir room prior to service.
5. In order to sing unto the Lord in worship, we must rehearse. Rehearsal is an integral part of leading the congregation in song. If you do not rehearse, you will not be able to sing during morning worship and/or during major worship services, (i.e., Choir Day, etc.). There are at least three rehearsal opportunities (two during revival season) per month. To keep up with the music that may be introduced or prepared, two rehearsals should be met, especially the one before the worship that the choir is to sing.

There are only three exceptions for being absent:

1. You or someone in your immediate family is sick,
2. Work or school obligations, or
3. Death.

Please contact Bro. Lyle for information provided on the front cover when you need to be absent from rehearsal or have any concerns.

MOUNT PEACE MUSICAL ENSEMBLES

The MPBC choirs are to LEAD the congregation in song during devotion and worship services. It is our mission to lead lost souls to Christ, to be good stewards in and out of the choir loft and to further carry out the vision of the church.

- Choir disciples should be disciples of the church (the Youth Choir is the ONLY exception), having a desire to sing, be committed and dedicated to being ambassadors for Christ through song. All choirs of the ministry sing on a designated Sunday for the 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and the 12:00 p.m. worship services and as directed by the Pastor for evening and Extended Ministry Services.

VOICES OF PEACE

The ensemble focuses on praise and worship songs, contemporary and traditional gospel, hymn arrangements and seasonal songs and anthems. This varied genre of music covers the diverse population of our congregation. This choir is also a culmination of all Mount Peace musical ensembles and is the principle choir for extended ministry.

Rehearsal: *Thursday at 7:30 p.m.*
Worship Service: *1st Sunday at 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.*

WOMEN'S CHORALE

The ensemble focuses on all styles of music that fit the female voice. Extensive training on three- and four-part harmony will be given. This group which was birthed from the Women's Day Choir now sings once a month and for extended ministry.

Rehearsal: *1st, 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.*
Worship Service: *4th Sunday at 8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m.*

PRAISE AND WORSHIP TEAM

The ensemble's primary focus is to encourage purpose driven, spirit filled community worship. Musical selection is based on what drives the emotional and spiritual pulse of the people. Biblical education will be given in the areas of exhortation and praise and worship.

Rehearsal: *TBA*
Worship Service: *4th Sunday at 8:00 a.m., "Hour of Power", Extended Ministry*

YOUTH PRAISE & WORSHIP TEAM

The ensemble's primary focus is to encourage purpose driven, spirit filled community worship. Musical selection is based on what drives the emotional and spiritual pulse of the people. Biblical education will be given in the areas of exhortation and praise and worship.

Rehearsal: *1st, 2nd and 3rd Monday at 7:30 p.m.*
Worship Service: *3rd Sunday at 8:00 a.m. or 12:00 p.m.*

MALE CHORUS

The ensemble sings music that is steeped in the tradition of quartet and traditional gospel music along with a new emphasis on contemporary music. Embellished hymns and hymn arrangements are part of the core repertoire.

Rehearsal: 1st and 2nd Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.
Worship Service: 2nd Sunday at 8:00 or 10:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m.

YOUTH/CHILDREN'S CHOIR

The ensemble focuses on the development of the young voice. Particular emphasis is placed on developing tonality, timbre, breath support, rhythm, choral decorum, and music and a religious ministry. This ensemble is the core building block for all the other musical ensembles.

Rehearsal: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Monday at 6:30 p.m.
Worship Service: 3rd Sunday at 8:00 or 10:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m.

MEN'S /WOMEN'S DAY/ SEASONAL ENSEMBLES

These groups are put together in order to meet the needs of seasonal services and programs of the church. Members are also encouraged to sing year round in these ensembles.

To Be Announced

MOUNT PEACE MUSICIANS

The core of the music ministry here at Mount Peace is our fine musicians. The job of church musician is one that is laden with rehearsals, services, extended ministry engagements and ones' personal musical growth and development. Mount Peace is blessed to have some of the best musicians in the city and as we continue to strive for musical excellence, we must keep the future of our ministry in mind. As we look towards the future we must be willing to redefine what it means to be a top notch church musician. We must be willing to train young aspiring musicians and start to write and produce our own music for worship services. We want our music ministry to possess all of the musical gifts: writing, playing, soloistic performing, arranging, and teaching.

"To much is given, much is required" (Luke 12:48)

MUSICAL ORDER OF WORSHIP PROFILE

INTROIT

Opening selection that marks the beginning of service! A clear message should be given in this song that will lay the foundation for the service.

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

This song gives an opportunity for the congregation to sing and feel part of the music at the church. It is also a time for the congregation to learn new songs from the hymnal.

CHORAL RESPONSE

A short song or refrain from a larger work. The song should be reflective as well as heartfelt. Typically, this space is used for a period of worship.

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

The selections used during this point in the service can consist of a wide variety of styles. Typically, there will be a fast and slow selection.

OFFERING

Music that is up-tempo is preferred during this time. The music should encourage people to give more freely.

MOMENTS OF MEDITATION

This is the time where people are given an opportunity to reflect and pray. The music here can be instrumental or vocal but should be done in a way that will inspire reverence.

CHORAL RESPONSE

A short song or refrain from a larger work. The song should be reflective as well as heartfelt.

SERMONIC SELECTION

The selection should support the sermon topic and scriptural lesson. The song should also be slow and usher in the spirit so the sermon can be better received.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHOIR MEMBER

“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy path” (Proverbs 3:6)

What is it to be a choir member? Singing on Sunday mornings? Singing until the congregation feels the spirit? Attending choir rehearsals to learn new music? These are less significant reasons for being a choir member. It means more than just singing, it means being part of a vital ministry of the church. Our chief goal should be to help win souls to Christ. In order to win souls, you must be “born again” (John 3:7). To have an effective music ministry, we need choirs of loving Christians. Understanding the importance of being a choir member comes through Bible Study, Prayer and Praise Service, and most importantly a personal relationship with Christ. Does this mean you have to be perfect? NO. But it should mean that we are striving towards the mark. ***PEACE IN PROGRESS!***

PERSONAL CONDUCT

A show of good moral standards, ethical and moral principles, personal habits and social involvement that reflect a commitment to Christianity!

A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHURCH

A Choir member should be a loyal attendant at the functions of the church, an ardent supporter of its activities, a prayerful backer of its spiritual endeavors and a prayerful supporter of the pastor.

A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD CHOIR RESPONSIBILITIES

This should be evidenced by good attendance, promptness, cooperation, support, and respect for those who labor in the work for Christ and for those who are in leadership!

EFFECTIVE MUSIC MINISTRY AND WORSHIP MUST HAVE ORDER

Holy Spirit

Pastor

Minister of Music/Director, and

Song and Worship Leader

If we follow this paradigm, then we should always be operating in the right spirit. God is always the center of everything that we do.

GENERAL CHOIR BASICS

WHAT SHOULD BE CUSTOMARY IN EVERY CHOIR

- There are points in the service that we need to stand. During this time the eyes of the choir should be on the director so we can stand all together in unison.
**** *Its looks messy when we all stand to our own tempo.***
- When we are ending a song or phrase, we need to watch the director and end together. There should never be a time where we end when we want or because we are tired of holding the note.
**** *Musical uniformity is a must.***
- Every choir member should know their vocal part. We can no longer depend on our neighbor. If we are in extended ministry, our musical selections should not be determined by which singers are there. We all need to know every song!
**** *God bless the child that has his own.***
- All personal needs should be addressed before entering the choir loft during rehearsal or during worship service. It is distracting to whoever is teaching the music, other choir members, and the flow of service.
**** *Use restroom or take care personal needs beforehand.***
- Talking, texting, and passing notes during both rehearsal and service are both distracting and rude. When one section is being taught their part, it is not your cue for social interaction. It really is the time for you to listen and be ready for your part. You can learn a lot about a song by listening to the others sectional parts. If there is no excess talking, you will find rehearsal will be smoother and there will be no time for disagreements.
**** *Remember why we are at rehearsal.***
- Persons who have not arrived at worship service in time for the entrance of the choir will be permitted to enter by the direction of the minister of music.
- Do not wear excessive jewelry and perfume during rehearsal and service. Please choose a small sized earring (for the ladies) and no earrings (for the gentlemen).
- Absolutely no food, gum, or drinks in the choir loft.
- Suggestions are welcomed from choir disciples. Let us all stay tactful and decent and in order when we express our thoughts.
- Please review songs, words and notes outside of rehearsals.
- The devotional period before rehearsal is designed for us to settle our spirits and center our minds on Godly thoughts before rehearsal begins. Please use this time to celebrate what God has done.

CHOIR DECORUM AND DISCIPLINE

Webster defines decorum as propriety and good taste in behavior, speech and dress.

Why do we have choir decorum?

I Corinthians 14:40 declares *“But all things should be done decently and in order.”*

Why?

Worship is vital to our individual lives and the whole church. Therefore, we should conduct ourselves during any worship experience (including choir rehearsal) in an orderly fashion. This sense of order will help place our minds in a worship atmosphere prepared to serve God. Those who are in leadership should function with order and direction rather than chaos and confusion.

Definitions and Generalizations:

1. Decorum, etiquette and discipline are all functions of form procedure and structure. They refer to behaviors that are acceptable when in the presence of others in social settings.
2. They require that individual wishes, desires and orientations become subordinate to group norms and expectations.
3. They provide a framework of acceptability within which performance operates. They provide an operational code of standards that enable the group to survive when faced with various problems that are likely to erode its effectiveness.
4. Etiquette is a function of manners, consideration of others and polite behavior toward others in group settings. It is the way in which we do things that are pleasing to those around us. It is governed by formal or informal codes of acceptable social behavior.
5. The most important function of etiquette is becoming a comfortable companion in the presence of others. **** BE POLITE ****
6. Decorum is a function of conduct, appearance and order in group settings. Appearance, communication and movement are three major dimensions of decorum.
7. Rules of decorum, etiquette and discipline that inhibit effective group presentations or that are destructive to positive group relations should be reviewed and modified. **** CHANGE NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS ****

MUSIC MINISTRY LEADERS

MINISTER OF MUSIC

The Minister of Music works along with the Pastor to plan, conduct and evaluates the church music and music for worship and other programs. The Minister of Music:

- Coordinates the work of the entire music ministry to include but not limited to schedules for rehearsals, worship services and funerals.
- Attends local and state workshops and conventions; monitor musical supplies and the upkeep of musical instruments and other musical equipment.
- Serves as liaison between pastor and choirs.
- Supervises all organists, pianists, other instrumentalists and choir directors, where applicable.
- Works cooperatively and efficiently with the Pastor in preparing music conducive to all worship services.
- Stays current with musical methods and advancements, materials and administration.

MUSICIANS

The church musicians and church band are responsible to the Pastor and Minister of Music for playing for worship services (including corporate worship) and choirs to whom they are assigned. The church musicians and band:

- Play all Sundays assigned to include both regular and special worship services as needed.
- Assist with planning music for worship service, choir rehearsal, musician's rehearsals and special musical events.
- Assist with the maintenance of musical instruments.

CHOIR DIRECTORS

Choir directors, where applicable, are responsible for effectively directing the choirs during worship service. He/She works directly with the Minister of Music prior to and during rehearsals. A cooperative and non-confrontational spirit is key to this position while having the respect and confidence of one's peers.

SOLOIST

The soloist is an intricate part of the music ministry and church. One of the perennial problems in many choirs is the problem of the soloist, which in reality is the problem of the choir. The gift of the individual must be weighed against the needs of the choir as a whole. The soloist does not "own" a song nor should one or two persons render all of the solos. The spirit filled conscientious soloist has the ability to take an ordinary song and turn it into a worship selection that will leave open the hearts of the people for true worship and the spoken word of God.

- A soloist should be willing to remove themselves so God can move through the music. Let us start with a positive attitude.
- Be willing to be pushed in order to reach new vocal heights. Our voices will grow as soloist when we first listen, practice and try new things.
- All soloists should attempt to sing the song as written or recorded; but remember you should make the song your own and strive to minister in your own way. One does not want a carbon copy of the recording.

- The choirs will not have a select few that will lead all the songs. The church choir is the one place that everyone can have a chance for vocal development and opportunity. **** Volunteer please**
- There should be more than one soloist to the new songs we learn. The choir should not be held captive to the schedule of the soloist.
- It is preferred to have a willing spirit over a great attitudinal voice.

VARIED ENSEMBLE LEADERS/SUPPORT

We, as music ministry leaders, must remember that it's our personal responsibility to serve as a positive example to the congregation and ensembles we assist during every rehearsal: worship experience is paramount. A positive spirit, kind demeanor and loving attitude are a must if you are in or want to be in this position.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

REVEAL THE CHARACTER OF GOD

Psalm 9:11 *“Sing praises to the Lord, who rules in Zion. Tell every nation what he has done”*

GIVING THANKS

Leviticus 22:29 *“When you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord follow the rules so that you will be accepted”*

With Our Mouths

Psalm 34:1 *“I will praise the Lord no matter what happens. I will consistently speak of his glories and grace.”*

Psalm 147:1 *“Praise the Lord! It is good to sing praise to our God; it is pleasant and right to praise him.”*

With Our Hands

Psalm 47:1 *“Clap your hands for joy, all people! Praise God with loud songs!”*

Psalm 33:2 *“Give thanks to the Lord with harps, sing to him with stringed instruments.”*

With Our Posture

Psalm 135:2 *“Yes, let his people praise him as they stand in his temple courts.”*

Romans 12:1 *“And so dear brothers, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy the kind he can accept.”*

II Samuel 6:14 *“David danced before the Lord with all his might and was wearing priest clothing.”*