



ST. PETER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Youth Ensemble Handbook

**St. Peter's Anglican Church
Tallahassee, Florida**

Youth Ensemble Handbook

O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven: Be ever present with your servants who seek through art and music to perfect the praises offered by your people on earth; and grant to them even now glimpses of your beauty, and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BCP Prayers and Thanksgivings 17

WHY DO WE SING?

We sing because God made us to sing! Singing is a very personal form of worship; no two voices are the same! You can sing alone or in a group, with accompaniment or a capella (voices only), in Medieval style or contemporary style or anything in between.

Singing appears many times in the Bible! The book of Psalms is a collection of songs that were originally sung by God's people. We have records of songs sung by David, Moses, Isaiah, Mary the mother of God, and even Jesus himself (Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26)! Moreover, worship through song is a tradition that has been passed down through hundreds of years of church history.

Singing can act as confession, lament, praise, thanksgiving, history, prayer, and petition. Choir members should read and understand the texts of the music they are singing so that their singing can be a true act of worship.

EXCELLENCE

St. Peter's strives for excellence in all it does. This is especially true for music, since it is such a prominent piece of the worship service. To that end, you should give as much time, energy and effort as you can to the success of the ensemble.

You do not have to be a trained singer to join the ensemble. Our Youth Ensemble is designed to help children to find their individual voice and to teach them how to sing. Everyone who participates will be at different places in their vocal development, so we will take them where they are and teach them to be able to support a unified choral sound. You should, however, have a willing heart, a desire to make a joyful noise to the Lord, and a good work ethic. We will sometimes perform challenging pieces, but many people find that they can rise up to the task. And always, we expect that our music will pass through a “curtain of grace” that allows it to be received as worship regardless of its faults.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals are on Wednesday Nights from 5:15 to 6 pm.

It is expected that rehearsals are a regular part of the week for choristers. Every member of the choir is important in helping others and in creating a beautiful sound, so it's important that you are at every rehearsal! We understand that things come up but we ask that you plan for choir rehearsal to be a regular part of your schedule, not the exception! If possible, please let Lucy Church know in advance if you are planning to miss a rehearsal (lucy@stpeterstallahassee.org).

It is important to be on time for both rehearsals and services! In order for the choir to keep performing ambitious (and fun!) repertoire, we need all the rehearsal time we can get.

WORSHIP SERVICES

The Youth Ensemble will participate in Sunday morning worship multiple times throughout the year. It is likely that you will be asked to sing for both services. You should report to the choir loft at 8:30 am, dressed in your choir robe. This means that you will need to arrive at 8:15 to get inside, put on vestments, grab your music, and make it to the loft. The adult choir will rehearse from 8:15 to 8:30, so vested choristers should sit in the seats at the top of the loft and wait

quietly until Chris finishes up with the adult choir. Since we only have 10 minutes to rehearse before the church starts to fill up, choristers should be ready to start singing right at 8:30.

PROCESSING

Depending on when the choir has been asked to sing, you may process at the beginning of the service. Vergers will direct the choir to its position at the back of the nave and send pairs of singers down the aisle at a prescribed speed. Each pair should maintain at least three pews between themselves and the pair ahead of them, walking slowly and adjusting speed depending on their predecessor's speed. This keeps the procession looking orderly, rather than bunching up at the end of the aisle. At the front of the church, each pair will stop briefly, acknowledge the cross by bowing their heads, and then walk back to the choir loft via the side aisles.

ATTIRE

Vestments

You will be given a Cassock (long-sleeved robe) and a Cotta (white overlay) before your first Sunday in the choir. Cassocks should be fully buttoned (to the neck) whenever the choir is seen by the congregation.

Shoes

Black closed-toed, quiet shoes should be worn. Our aisle is made of wood, and any excessive stomping noises can be distracting to worshippers. There is a shoe caddy in the Choir Room if you would like to keep a pair of "choir shoes" at the church.

Jewelry

Please don't wear large or attention-grabbing headbands or jewelry; we're striving for a unified sound, and we should look like a unified group!

STEWARDSHIP OF ROBES, FOLDERS, AND MUSIC

You will have a labeled hanger in the Choir Room, where your vestments should be hung neatly. Remember people can see into this room quite easily, and it is used for other things during the week; we don't want to look like slob!

You will be assigned a folder and given music. Please take care of these so that they last as long as possible. Please only use pencil to mark your music! You may leave your folder in your cubby in the choir room or take your music home to practice with it; if you take it home, please make sure that you bring it with you to the next rehearsal.

SERVICE PARTICIPATION

The choristers will remain in the choir loft for the entire service and will walk up for communion with the choir. It is expected that they sit quietly and participate in all parts of the service. If they participate in the acolyte program, they will need to make sure that they are not serving on the particular Sundays that they are singing in the Youth Ensemble.

MISSIONS

On occasion the Youth Ensemble may use its gifts to minister to others at nursing homes or elsewhere. If an opportunity comes up, we will email the Ensemble to see if we have a large enough contingent to represent ourselves and our church well. Music is a powerful tool for ministry, since it speaks so directly to the heart. It is important that we learn to give back to God who so generously gives to us!

COMMUNICATION

The best way for us to communicate with you is via email. Please be sure that you have provided a current email address to Lucy Church (lucy@stpeterstallahassee.org) so that she can keep you up to date

with choir information. You can also reach Lucy's cell phone at 216-780-5788.