

Welcome to the **Men of Praise**

Introduction, Mandates, Policies & General Info

Last updated May 26, 2010

1. Introduction

Welcome to the **Men of Praise**, an interdenominational regional male choir based in Woodstock, with membership spanning a wide area. We meet for our weekly rehearsals every Wednesday night, from 8pm to 10pm at Emmanuel Reformed Church. This document attempts to answer many questions that might come up, so read it through first. If there's any question unanswered, just ask a choir member or board officer.

The choir was founded in 1993 by John Oosterink and Bert Witteveen with its sole intent to bring praise to our God through quality singing using our combined voices. It is hoped that you find attending and participating a rewarding experience, with warm fellowship and friendship between members.

Like anything of quality, this choir expects dedication from its members in attending all rehearsals and scheduled engagements. Personal schedule conflicts do happen, but choir functions must be given due consideration, and not neglected.

The board likes to keep its membership list up-to-date. Please let us know and keep up-to-date the following personal details so that we know who to contact in the event of an emergency:

- Your name, address, postal code & home phone #
- Spouses and/or contact name

You may feel very overwhelmed when you see the amount of music in the repertoire, and how much music the existing members know. Don't let this daunt you, it just takes time. Nobody expects you to sing them right away, so take the necessary time to learn them, and let the other members around you in your section help you. It is not essential to know how to read music to make things work, although it does help!

2. Mandate

The mandate of the **Men of Praise** can be summed up very simply:

- To bring glory to our God through song
- To be a music ministry to our community, and wherever we travel
- To use only sacred and Word-inspired music
- To not charge our hosts any fees for our attendance

As that last point states, we don't charge our hosts a fee for coming to sing. We also discourage the selling of tickets for concerts that we participate in. Instead, we encourage the use of a freewill offering to help defray the costs. The board will decide on a case by case basis to accept or decline invitations to any venue that has made the decision to sell tickets.

3. Yearly Dues

The choir charges dues for being a member and at present it is \$60.00 per year. There is a yearly review of this amount by the board, and any change will be communicated to the membership.

At the first rehearsal in January, the **treasurer** will seek out each member for payment of the dues. The choir is not a social club. It is a serious endeavor, and it takes money to pay the bills. We want the members to take a personal stake in the choir and its various activities. While CD & tape sales do form the bulk of the choirs' funding, being a member has a price and forces one to "take ownership" in its activities.

4. Concert Attire

As a choir, we want to present a professional and unified visual image at our singing engagements through the wearing of a clothing ensemble. Each member must purchase through the choir a complete ensemble consisting of a vest, ascot tie and bow tie. See the **clothier** or another member of the board to find out how to obtain them. The cost of the ensemble is split 50/50 between you and the choir, and therefore the clothing is not owned by you but is rented until you resign. Upon resigning, you will be expected to return everything including your music binders and you will be compensated \$40.00.

In addition to the above clothing requirements, each member must also have a plain white long-sleeved dress shirt (not patterned or off-white), black dress pants (suit style, not cords or black denim jeans) and black dress shoes (not sneakers) as these are not supplied in the ensemble.

5. Rehearsals, the Sign-In book & Attendance

The choir meets every Wednesday night for rehearsals. New members that don't know what part they sing should check with another member to get some idea as to where to sit. Each section (tenor 1, tenor 2, bass 1 and bass 2) also has a **section leader**. These individuals look after the members in their respective section. If you are unable to attend a rehearsal or a concert or will be absent for some time, it is imperative that you **let your section leader know**.

There is a sign-in book at every rehearsal. Please initial beside your name under the appropriate date to show that you were there. This book is used to track a members' attendance, and helps the board to know when there is an attendance problem.

If a member has not been attending rehearsals for more than three weeks, and the board is not aware of a satisfactory explanation for this absence, then that member is requested to refrain from participating in concerts and performances until rehearsal attendance improves. If improvement is not forthcoming, said member can be expelled from the choir if it is deemed necessary by the board. The board sincerely hopes that this action will never take place.

While attending rehearsals is the only way to properly learn the music in the repertoire, attending concerts is just as important. We need to have enough voices in each section to bring a balanced sound for the audience. Seeing as we advertise ourselves as a "## voice choir", having many people missing makes people wonder why they are not there. Keep in mind that if the director

or accompanists decided not to come, for whatever reason, the concert could certainly not go on. The same applies to you.

6. Coffee Schedule

At the beginning of every choir season, in September, a coffee schedule is handed out. It is your responsibility to see what weeks you are on the schedule, and be there early to setup. Check with your scheduled partner to see what is entailed in this duty. If it happens that you can't be there on one of your scheduled nights, it is up to you to find a replacement. Remember, the other members take their coffee break very seriously. If there is none, they know whose turn it was.

7. Music Repertoire & Binders

Upon joining the choir, you will receive two music binders from the **librarian**, a white one for rehearsals and a black one for concerts. The black one will be empty and is to be filled with music specifically for concerts. The white one will have the music that will be rehearsed throughout the year, complete with an index.

While the binders and their contents belong to the choir, it is your responsibility to care for them. Because the rehearsal binder usually contains on the order of 50 pieces of music, the cost of the music alone can be substantial. If you leave, or are absent from choir for a long time, you will be expected to return the binders and music. If the binder should become lost, the board reserves the right to demand suitable compensation from the member to cover the costs of replacing the binder and contents.

In the rehearsal binder will be found some photocopied music. There should be no cause for concern regarding copyright infringement. Several scenarios can cause photocopies to be used:

- Music is out of print, and is no longer available
- Music is on order, but is not here yet
- We have obtained permission to copy the music from the publisher

All members have likes and dislikes when it comes to music. Some people like hymns, others like praise songs. It is very hard to satisfy a diverse group of people. If you know of or have a piece of music that you would like us to learn, bring it to the attention of any **music selection** member in whatever format you have, be it sheet music, tape, CD, vinyl, or just a song title. A copy of the music will be made for later perusal, and the original will be returned. The music selection board will then make the decision whether or not to include the piece in our repertoire.

8. Singing Schedule & Activities

Our singing schedule runs from September until May, with most of the schedules events known about four months in advance. We start with a barbeque in late August, to bring everybody together and welcome new members. The year usually finishes around May with a dinner and the annual general meeting (AGM), where general business issues are discussed and elections for vacant board offices are held.

We try to sing at least once a month, and our venues can range quite a distance. We can be seen at anniversaries, weddings, funerals, fund raisers, Sunday worship services, etc. Sunday mornings and long holiday weekends are generally avoided because many members are not available on those dates.

There are also three major concerts every year that we either manage ourselves or participate in. They are our Christmas concert in December, the Southwestern Ontario Male Choral Festival in April and our yearly local concert held either in the fall or spring.

9. Recordings

As was mentioned earlier, the primary method of fund for the choir is selling CD's and tapes of our recordings. The money raised sustains our existence, allows for growth, and pays for things like the risers we use at concerts, our concert attire, etc. This is the preferable method of fundraising rather than charging our hosts to come out and sing, or selling tickets to our concerts. Part of the choirs' mandate is to allow free access to our music ministry and having free-will offerings in place of ticket sales to help defray the costs of events satisfies this mandate.

The recording sales are looked after by the **Media Sales** board members. A table is usually set up at the host location, displaying the various recordings. In the event of a Sunday engagement, no sales will take place. Instead, the names of people interested in purchasing recordings will be written down and contacted on another day.

Making a recording takes dedication, determination, time, money and a lot of rehearsals. Several have already been done. Typically, one recording will be done within a two year period and it is hoped you will experience this unique event. Each one takes about three consecutive days, with about 3 to 4 hours each day.

10. Board Composition, Office Term Lengths, Nominations & Elections

The choir board is made up of many different offices. We have a unique mixture of elected, appointed and permanent offices and positions, not likely found in most other organizations. The "appointed" and "permanent" positions are not elected since they require people with extra time demands or special skills and the board looks after filling these.

- President (elected)
- Vice-President (elected)
- Treasurer (elected)
- Membership/Secretary (elected)
- Media Sales (appointed)
- Clothier (appointed)
- Librarian (appointed)
- Director (permanent, also **music selection**)
- Organist (permanent, also **music selection**)
- Pianist (permanent, also **music selection**)

There is also a second committee called the Music Selection Committee comprised of the director, organist and pianist of the choir. It oversees and makes decisions regarding which musical

selections the choir will sing, and which are not appropriate. No pieces may be brought directly to the choir, they must go through this committee first.

The following rules govern elections, nominations & term lengths for board offices, except for the permanent positions of Director, Organist & Pianist:. Those three positions, should they become vacant, will be filled by the board through interview and selection of an appropriately skilled individual.

10.1 General Information & Pre-Election Details

1. All elections shall be held at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the end of the choir season, unless extenuating circumstances such as dismissal or resignation of a board officer forces an early election.
2. If an officer prematurely resigns his office, or does not wish to continue after the term expires, said officer may not hold any other board office for a period of one year.
3. Board officers shall be held to the highest standards of professionalism and trust. Should an officer betray that trust through what the board determines to be inappropriate activities or behaviors, the remaining board members reserve the right to dismiss said member immediately.
4. There must be a minimum of two weeks between notification to the membership of a vacant board office and elections for said office, give time to gather nominations.
5. In the event of early elections, the membership will be notified immediately of the vacancy. A search must ensue for suitable candidates, and elections must be held within one month following the vacancy to fill the offices.
6. In the event that a board member is retiring at the end of his term, the membership will be notified immediately and nominations for said office will be taken until the evening of the AGM.
7. All elections will be done by secret ballot, presided by a board-appointed **Ballot Committee**, headed by a **Returning Officer**. This committee will be formed from members that are not present board officers or those nominated for office, and must be in place before the day of the elections. Once all the elections have been completed, the ballots will be destroyed and the Ballot Committee disbanded.

10.2 Nominations

1. All nominations are taken by a nominating committee. This is comprised of 3 choir members (not existing board members) and will be established every year on or before the beginning of the choir season.
2. No member may occupy or be nominated for more than one elected board office at any given time.
3. Nominations for any vacant board office will be accepted up to and including the evening of the AGM. Nominations for an office will no longer be taken when the presiding elections officer closes nominations.
4. Individuals must be present when they are nominated.
5. Individuals must be approached and agree to let their name stand before being nominated.
6. If only one person is nominated for a vacant office, that person can be acclaimed to that office, provided there is at least one vote for the nominated individual.

10.3 Term Lengths

1. All initial terms are two years in length. If elected at the AGM, the term will run for two full years. If elected in mid-season, the term will run for the remainder of the year plus one full year.

2. Two of the four elected board positions come up for nomination on odd years (vice-president and secretary). The other two elected positions (president and treasurer) come up for nomination on even years.
3. Once the initial term is complete (up to two years in length), if the existing member wishes to continue in the position, the member name will be put forward for nomination at the AGM for another two-year term. If they do not want to renew their term, they can be nominated for another position on the board.
4. Any person replacing a board member in mid-term shall complete said term and then be eligible for a single term (2-year) extension.
5. No office bearer shall remain on the board for more than two consecutive two-year terms.

11. Policy Revisions

The board reserves the right to correct, modify, update and remove any policy where it is deemed necessary. Should any member find difficulties or faults with any policies, that member should submit to the board, in writing, the nature of the difficulty and possible resolutions. Requested policy changes will be discussed by the board, and at the AGM.

12. Job Descriptions

1. President

- Chairs all board meetings and the AGM.
- Open the choir practices with news, scripture and prayer
- Gives choir introductions at performance venues
- Is the main contact for booking requests, and investigates any potential venue for proper facilities

2. Vice President

- Shares tasks with the president.
- In the case that the president is incapacitated, performs all the duties of the president.
- Looks after all advertising for our concerts.

3. Secretary

- Records and maintains all minutes at board meetings and the AGM.
- Maintains the membership list.
- Creates the coffee server list.
- Receives and disburses mail.
- Keep members informed of upcoming choir events

4. Treasurer

- Collects yearly dues from members
- Pays all eligible invoices and expenses
- Keeps accurate financial records
- Presents financial reports to the board and choir members at the AGM.
- Sends cards/flowers/fruit baskets/etc to members or spouses on special days (anniversaries, funerals, sickness) or when notified of one of these events.

5. Librarian

- Stores and organizes all sheet music
- Keeps an up-to-date list of all music titles on file
- Assembles the binders for new members
- Brings extra copies of all active music to all practices and concerts
- Distributes new music at practices.

6. Clothier

- Keeps track of all extra stock (ties, vests, shirts, cloth)
- Makes recommendations on attire
- Orders extra or replacement articles

7. Media Sales

- Administers and promotes sales of all recordings through all available channels (concerts, mail, consignment)
- Keeps accurate financial records of all sales and tracks amount of media in stock
- Informs the president when it is time to order more media.

8. Director

- Provides leadership to the choir through teaching and conducting at all practices and concerts.
- One of the members of the Music Selection Committee.
- A non-elected member of the choir board. If the position involves regular monetary compensation then the position on the board is non-voting.
- Like all other choir members, the director must abide by the choir mandate and policies.
- Aids in the overall arrangement of the concert program in both layout and music selections.

9. Organist

- Accompanies the choir on the Organ.
- One of the members of the Music Selection Committee.
- A non-elected member of the choir board.

10. Pianist

- Accompanies the choir on the Piano
- One of the members of the Music Selection Committee.
- A non-elected member of the choir board.

11. Section Leaders

- Looks after the members in their respective section.
- Be a guide to members that need help.
- Welcome new members and ally them with veteran members for support.
- Keep in contact with members who are missing.
- Present your members issues to the board

Men of Praise Board & Section Leaders (2010-2011)

Board Offices:

Director	Henry Bruines.....
Organist	Lois Goodall.....
Pianist	Peter Schepers421-2873
President	Lewis Anjema.....
Vice-President	Andy Vanderploeg
Treasurer	Eugene Kruysse.....
Secretary	John Hiemstra.....
Media Sales	Chuck Jensen.....
Clothier	Harry Wubs539-6402
Librarian	Gordon Sherk

Section Leaders:

First Tenors	?
Second Tenors	?
First Bass	?
Second Bass	?

Bylaws Modification Log:**Apr 8, 2005:**

Changes topic 1 'Introduction' to remove the mention of what towns our members come from, and replaced it with 'a large area'.

Changed topic 4 'Concert Attire' to include a compensation rate of \$40 for return of ensemble, and that members may buy their own white shirt, rather than through the clothier.

Changed topic 10.3.3 'Term Lengths' to remove the automatic two-year term renewal for existing board members. Now board members at the end of the first two-year term must be re-elected for the job at the AGM.

May 1, 2005:

Changed topic 4 'Concert Attire' to say that all members must now purchase their own white shirt, and the concert clothier no longer supplies them in the ensemble. The entire section was restructured for clarity.

July 12, 2006:

Enhanced the Director, Pianist and Organist job descriptions (section 12). Added an extra paragraph (section 10) describing the layout and mandate of the Music Selection Committee.

May 26, 2010:

Brought the document up to date as many sections had outdated references. Cleaned up some wording and removed some redundancies.