

**Arlington Heights United
Methodist Church**

**Chancel Choir
New Member
Handbook**

October 2006

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

1. There is no audition for choir membership. Anyone wishing to join choir should visit a rehearsal and talk with the director. Please meet with Robe Chairman to receive a robe. The Librarian will issue a hymnal and folder and assign a box.
2. Visitor and new member forms are available on table. While the vice president is responsible for these forms, please assist if you know or have met the visitor. Completed forms need to be given to the president so visitors and new members may be introduced during announcements.
3. Please report any problems with your robe (zippers, tears, soiled robe, lost robe) to Robe Chairman.
4. If you know in advance that you will be not be in attendance, please indicate dates and reason on the attendance sheets. We're not being nosey it just helps with planning.
5. During the week you may call or e-mail your section leader with information about yourself or other choir members. Section leaders will pass information on to vice president who will transmit information to others as needed.
6. When a member fails to be regular in attendance at rehearsals and services their robe, folder, and hymnal may be reassigned to a new member. Another robe, folder, and hymnal will be assigned when the member becomes active again. The inactive member's name will be removed from the roster and added to a choir booster roster so they may continue to receive e-mails, but will not be counted as an active member for attendance purposes.
7. Please remember that attendance, while not mandatory, helps everyone. You are expected to be in attendance in the choir loft on Sunday mornings if it is at all possible. If you are going to be out of town over the weekend please attend rehearsal on Wednesday night as we practice anthems several weeks in advance.
8. Any time you can help out by singing two services please do so. We are not divided into two choirs. There are times we will be asked to sing two services. If each choir member would commit to singing two services once a month, then we would be assured of ample singers to cover the 8:30 service.

EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN
(BUT SOMETIMES I NEED TO BE REMINDED)

The proper “showmanship” for a church choir is reverence, respect, dignity, and attention to all the elements of worship.

Countenance is a reflection of the heart. It isn’t necessary to smile all the time. Perhaps the best approach to take is to be mentally involved in every aspect of the service. Your face will take care of itself. The eyes smile brighter than the teeth.

Please no sleeping, chewing gum, reading books, grading papers, writing, or passing notes to other choir members during the church service.

Please be sure your robe is closed over the knee area, particularly when legs are crossed or spread.

Before swatting a fly, mopping your brow, fanning, blowing your nose, playing with your nails and fingers, scratching your face, or smoothing your hair, ask yourself, “Is this move absolutely necessary?” Such movements can interrupt some worshipper’s train of thought.

The attention of each choir member should be focused on the action of the moment. Always sing, sit, read, and listen as if the eyes of the congregation are focused on you throughout the service. We are leaders in worship along with the ministers.

Hold your folder in your left hand with your right arm at your side if we are not singing or reading material for the service.

When singing, hold your folder away from your body and as horizontal to the floor as possible. This will allow your voice to project over the folder and enable you to look at the director easier.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT PROCEDURES

1. Pick up rehearsal music and check attendance sheet on table; indicate attendance plans for Sunday morning, make additions to prayer request clipboard.
2. Visit with friends, greeting new members making them feel welcome.
3. Check table and bulletin board for posted information.
4. Pencils are attached to chairs in various different places. Check to see if you have access to one.
5. You may sit anywhere within your section; men sitting in the middle; please fill in towards the middle as rehearsal starts.
6. Be in your seat, ready to sing at 7:30, rehearsal will be over at 9:00.
7. Announcements will be made around 8:30. Please list your prayer concerns on the clipboard. The Vice President will share them with the choir at 9:00.
8. A nursery is available for every choir rehearsal and choir function. Nursery coordinator is in charge of making arrangements for the nursery. Please be prompt in picking up your child after choir.

SUNDAY MORNING PROCEDURES

1. Sunday morning warm-ups begin at 8:00 and 10:25. Please be prompt as there are only 20-25 minutes to work on the anthems. This is the only time we have to achieve a true balance before the worship service begins. Even though the congregation is appreciably smaller for the 8:30 service, they deserve our best choral effort. If each choir member would commit to two services once a month, then we would be assured of ample singers to cover that service.
2. Both choir room and ladies robe room will be locked during the service. We suggest leaving your purse out of sight. Watch visibility from robe room door and mirror. Please do not carry purse into the sanctuary with you.
3. Please get robe, folder, hymnal, music, and bulletin before warm-up starts.
4. Check attendance on alphabetical sheet. The church office uses these sheets to record Sunday morning attendance.
5. Please sit towards the center of each row leaving the front row vacant. Fill in the front row and the outer seats as needed.
6. Adjustments will be made before leaving the choir room along with instructions on lining up and how we will enter the church – i.e. processing or entering through the choir loft. Please be cooperative and flexible as no one has a permanent seat.
7. Please keep your voices low while waiting in the atrium. Be cognizant of worshippers trying to enter church; do not crowd around doorways blocking entrances.

WORSHIP SERVICE PROCEDURES

1. Do not start singing processional hymn until you have entered the sanctuary. The processional hymn is sung in unison until the choir is in place in the choir loft.
2. On all other hymns sing first and last verses unison, middle verses in parts.
3. The offertory plate should be passed during the Children's Time. The plate should be on the back row by the basses and is to be passed down the back row first, passing forward to the altos, continuing down each row and moving forward until it comes to rest at one end of the first row. One person, either at or near the end of the row, needs to take the plate meeting the ushers at the center of the rail. Hand the plate to the minister and wait in place until after the doxology. Return to your seat as the ushers turn to leave.

4. Please watch the director for indication as to when to stand and sit. Be attentive as we need to rise and sit as a group. Use the pocket attached to the right of your chair for extra music, hymnal, etc. This will enable you to sit without turning around to remove items from your seat.
5. Stand with folder open if we will be singing or reading (whether you are reading material or not). When singing, hold your folder away from your body and as horizontal to the floor as possible. This will allow your voice to project over the folder and enable you to look at the director easier.
6. The choir director will signal to close the folder after an anthem if we are to remain standing.
7. We have been standing during the reading of the Gospel by the minister. If the congregation is not joining in on the reading of the scripture then stand with your folder closed. If the congregation is reading with the minister, then hold your folder open, even if you do not have material to read.
8. Folder is always closed during the Gloria Patre and the Doxology. If you are new, fake it until you learn it.
9. The closed folder will be held in the left hand at chest level. Right hand drops straight down at the right side.
10. When the service includes Communion (by intinction) be prepared to stow your music in your box or on your chair at the appropriate time (DO NOT LEAVE ON THE FLOOR). The back row should move out to the left first, followed by the next row and on down. We need to leave quickly, going down the steps, and entering immediately behind the altar rail. We walk behind the railing to the ministers and continue moving forward making a circle as we return to our seats in the choir loft. Please sit as you reach your chair.
11. First row should be prepared to leave choir loft first when the service is over.

BACK IN THE CHOIR ROOM

1. Please sort music into baskets on librarian's desk.
2. Recycle paper materials into recycle bin. All other trash goes into trashcan.
3. Return your hymnal and folder to your box.
4. Hang your robe and stole neatly on your hanger making sure the stole is straight. The new ones wrinkle easily. Each hanger has a name on it. Replace it alphabetically on the rack.

Arlington Heights UMC Chancel Choir

Job Descriptions

All officers are invited to attend officer meetings. Please notify us of new address so you may receive notices of meetings.

- President** make announcements; introduce new members or visitors; plan agenda and preside over officer meetings; keep in touch with news of choir members through section leaders and vice president
- Vice President** substitute in the absence of the President; greet new members and visitors; provide information form to be filled out; pass information on to Choir Director and Publications for addition to roster; prepare a welcome article for newsletter introducing new members to choir; initiate recruitment throughout the year; invite new church members to choir after Sunday services
- Treasurer** responsible for monitoring choir bank accounts; collect and present bills to be paid; prepare financial report for officer meetings showing allocation of monies
- Secretary** prepare folder of blank attendance sheets to be kept in Secretary's box, update attendance sheets monthly or as needed; check and copy weekly attendance; give copies to section leaders, choir director; keep master record of attendance for award purposes; record minutes for officer meetings; prepare copies to be read at next meeting; keep a notebook of records to be passed on to next secretary
- Sunshine** chairman of committee composed of section leaders; lead choir in prayer concerns at end of rehearsal; inform president/director of illnesses, and other choir concerns, set up e-mail contact with members for choir concerns; initiate call line when choir needs to receive information quickly; send cards or order flowers, etc. following guidelines:
Get Well card - illness, minor day surgery
Plant - \$35.00 limit – member having surgery requiring several days' recuperation, extended illness
Sympathy card – loss of aunt, uncle, grandparent, grandchild
Plant - loss of spouse, child, parent, in-laws
Coordinate meals as needed by any choir member
We know there may be exceptions to these guidelines.

Section Leaders	serve on the Sunshine committee; fill in for Sunshine chairman when asked; look for and greet new section members or visitors; pick up attendance sheets for your section after rehearsal; contact members who have missed two weeks in a row; report any information regarding section members to sunshine chairman and/or director; add to prayer list if requested; follow up calls as needed. <u>Remember, communication and member care is the key to keeping choir members active.</u>
Social	be willing to work as a committee; plan social events for the choir not limited to but including: coordinate birthday celebrations; organize receptions; choir retreat; end of year banquet coordinating with installation of officers
Librarian	inventory and process new music; keep library in order; issue folder and hymnal to new members; assign box; maintain posted alphabetical list of assigned boxes
Publications	prepare and send out newsletter as needed; pass roster for updates quarterly; update choir roster; provide corrections through e-mail or newsletter and printed copies
Historian	maintain scrapbook of choir activities and programs; include published activities of choir members as available
Robes	issue robes to new members; maintain robes including repairs and cleaning once a year; maintain posted roster of robes
Publicity	notify press of special performances – Messiah, Easter Concert, Fall Concert – (MUST get approval of article from Choir Director before releasing) prepare flyers, posters for special events
Nursery	notify church nursery coordinator for all nursery dates; contact church nursery coordinator if caregiver is not present as requested