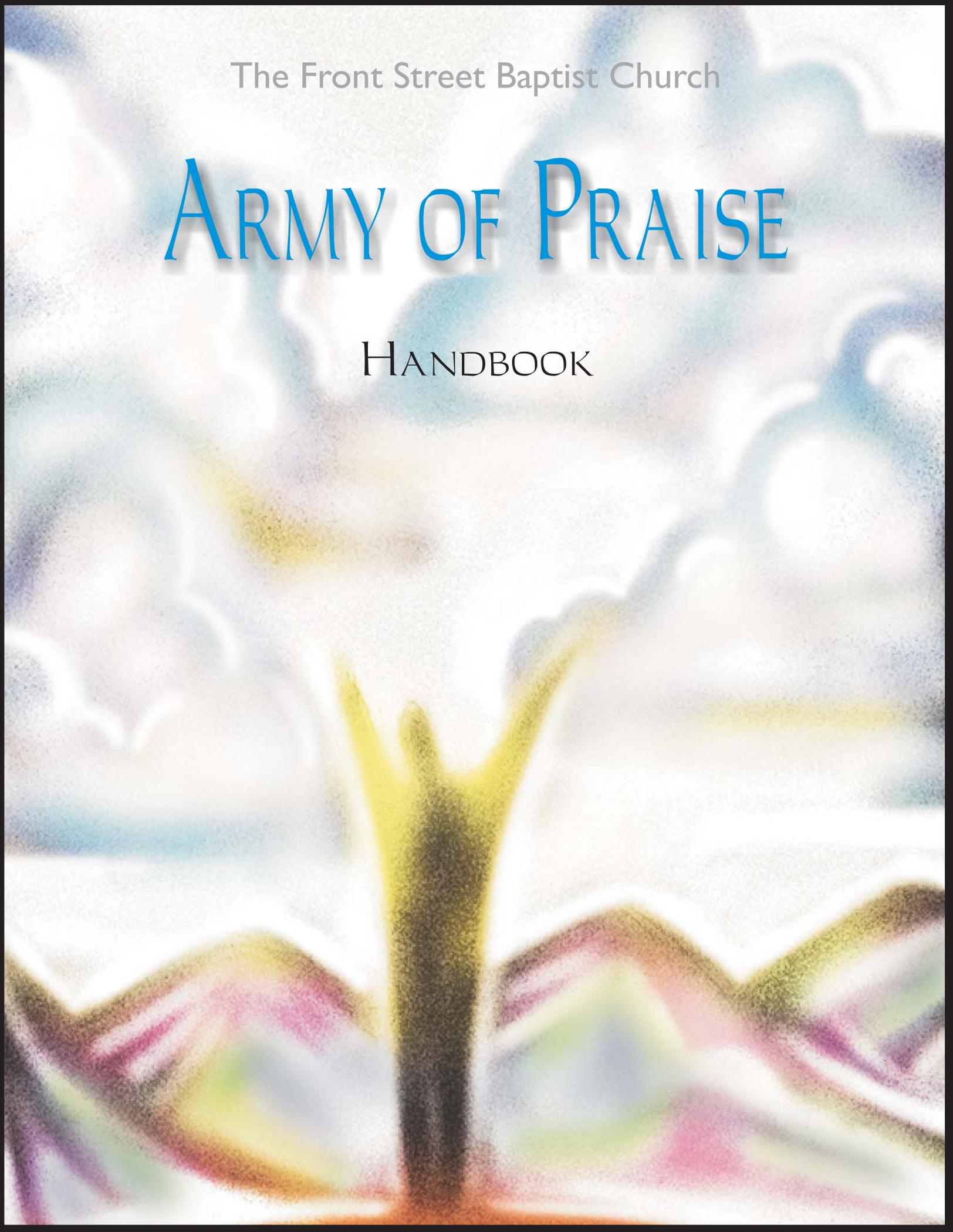


The Front Street Baptist Church

ARMY OF PRAISE

HANDBOOK



Welcome to the Worship Ministry and the Army of Praise at Front Street!

Have you ever joined a group or organization and felt overwhelmed by the details? All of the “how-to” and “what-to-do-when” questions can be discouraging at first. This handbook is designed to answer your questions so you will feel at ease from day one. Please read it in its entirety. By the end, you will know the purpose, philosophy, goals, and procedures that make the Army of Praise such a powerful tool of ministry here at Front Street.



**Front Street Baptist Church
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**Kenny Lamm
Worship Pastor**

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Purpose and Philosophy



Philosophy of Worship

Worship - Our Greatest Privilege

In Matthew 22:37 - Jesus says that the most important command we can honor is to:

LOVE the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.

Because of this command, we see worship as our highest priority at Front Street Baptist Church. It is the one activity we do on earth that we will continue to do forever in heaven. We seek to be passionate and vulnerable worshipers who know and express God's heart, because we believe that worship is the goal of salvation. We believe that experiencing the presence and glory of Jesus Christ in worship is the most valuable and priceless treasure on earth. It is in worship that we find the greatest sense of fulfillment that life can offer.

Intimacy

We do not worship an uninterested deity from afar. Rather, we experience the very Presence of God as we worship Him. Jesus Christ is profoundly present in the midst of worship through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is truly with us as we worship and adore Him. We experience intimacy with God as we pour out our hearts in worship.

Transformation

As the Holy Spirit moves in the midst of our worship, we find healing, peace, strength, and joy. Our lives are re-centered on Jesus Christ as we worship Him, and as we gaze on His beauty and glory, we are changed to be more like Him. Jesus came to give us abundant life, and as we worship we receive this life.

Expressions of Worship

Jesus stated that the greatest commandment is that we are to love God with all that we are. We were created whole beings, and thus we value worship that incorporates a full expression of our humanity, including intellectual, emotional, and physical aspects.

We value worship that expresses itself physically: You may find people clapping their hands, kneeling at the altar, raising their hands, or simply being still and silent as we worship. We value all of these physical expressions because God created our bodies (not just our minds) to worship.

We value worship that expresses itself emotionally: As we worship, you may see people weeping, smiling, or laughing. God created our emotions, and although we are not to be ruled by them, we are to express them in worship. God is passionate about us and He is worthy of our most passionate forms of emotional expression.

We value worship that expresses itself intellectually: While we value the expression of emotion in worship, we also value the expression of truth. Some of the songs we sing are simple love songs to Jesus, but others express theological truths that help us to worship with understanding and assist us in spiritual growth.

We also value worship that expresses itself in holy living: We desire to be a people who live a life of worship, rather than those who merely attend a service of worship once a week. Worship is hypocrisy unless the substance of our lives lines up with the words we sing. Worship is not just singing songs, praying, and listening to a sermon, it is giving one's life over completely to Jesus. We desire to be people who live every aspect of our lives as an act of worship to God.

"Styles" of Worship at Front Street

Today, one hears many labels characterizing worship in churches, such as "contemporary," "blended," "traditional," and "liturgical." A few years ago, Front Street offered two distinctively different services—one "contemporary" and the other "traditional." Our church now offers only one worship service "style." This single service has grown out of seeking God's direction for this body of believers.

Front Street is made up of young and old and has a rich tradition. Our worship services may seem quite "contemporary" to people who grew up in traditional churches in that we use drums, keyboards, etc. in addition to piano and organ. Our 60-voice Army of Praise has transitioned from a performance choir to a worship leading choir that is passionate about leading our people into the presence of God each week. We sing praise and worship songs that are very recently written as well as classic worship choruses written in the last few decades. We also make use of the great hymns, although they are often arranged with a "contemporary" accompaniment. We have seen God greatly bless the worship services at Front Street as young and old alike are drawn into His presence.

Front Street also makes much use of drama, multimedia enhancements of songs and sermons, interpretive movement, and other creative additions to help engage our body, emotions, and mind in worship. Pastor Gerald Bontrager, our senior pastor, is a passionate preacher and expositor of the Bible. His messages are thoroughly biblical and practical, and they address the needs of people today.

The Mission of the Worship Ministry of Front Street

The mission of the Worship Ministry of Front Street Baptist Church is ***to lead people into the presence of God through transformational worship***. As worship leaders, our goal is not to have people go away from Sunday worship at Front Street saying, "Wow! The choir was awesome this morning," or "Aren't those instrumentalists impressive?" While we do seek to be the very best we can be to glorify God, striving for excellence in all we do for Him, our utmost goal is that when people leave this place on Sunday mornings, they will say, "Wow! Isn't God good?" or "Oh, how I felt His presence in the service this morning."

Through the use of congregational song, both old and new, through the use of musical accompaniment, both traditional and contemporary (and everything in between), through the use of multimedia, drama, and more, we seek to make each Sunday a special time in God's house. God created us to worship Him, and that should be a priority in each Christian's life.

We will continue to explore ways to help each person who enters this holy place to encounter God in a special way each Lord's day. This will involve continuing to stretch our adult choir & instrumentalists musically and spiritually, challenging our wonderful drama team to push beyond the heights they have already reached, exploring new areas of multimedia usage to enhance worship, and training up our children and youth to develop a heart for worship and to be worship leaders of tomorrow.

Front Street has been blessed with people of tremendous talents. God expects much of us. We are striving to be faithful in using the gifts God has given us to grow a worshipping church that truly pleases God.

Biblical Roots

Our Biblical music ancestors span the scripture from Genesis to Revelation: Jubal, the instrument maker; Miriam, singing and dancing once the Israelites were across the Red Sea; the Levites, including Heman, Asaph, and Ethan; the psalmists and the Israelites who sang these texts; and the hosts of heaven, who sang at Jesus' birth and around the throne of God.

The Psalms, the songbook of the Old Testament, provide a wealth of texts about relationships to God - expressing joy, thanksgiving, need, as well as sorrow. Our best Biblical role models are the Levites. They were the music leaders of Old Testament temple worship. 1 Chronicles 15 offers us information regarding music, instruments, and worship life.

The New Testament continues the importance of music and worship in the Christian life. From the story of our Savior's birth through the books of Ephesians and Colossians, the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is emphasized in all of our lives.

Calling vs. Volunteer

God equips each one of us with gifts, talents, abilities, desires, and passions for different areas of ministry. We believe that your area of service and ministry should line up with your passion, talent, and spiritual gift.

HOW GOD HAS SHAPED ME FOR MINISTRY

Spiritual Gifts

Hearth

Abilities

Personality

Experience

In music, the level of talent may vary widely, but the passion and desire is the same for all. Before joining, pray that God will confirm in your heart that this is an area of service in which you can invest your time and effort for an extended time. We are looking for choir members for the long haul in ministry.

The Difference Between Volunteering and Being Called Into God's Service: I Chronicles 15:16-19; Colossians 4:17

"When God has put His call on you, woe be to you if you turn to the right hand or to the left. He will do with you what He never did with you before the call came; He will do with you what He is not doing with other people. Let Him have His way." Oswald Chambers

1. A volunteer looks upon rehearsal as another commitment he's been obligated to fulfill, but someone called of God looks upon rehearsal as another opportunity to be used of God.
2. A volunteer looks upon any constructive criticism with indignation, but someone called of God is grateful for feedback because he wants to be the best he can be.
3. A volunteer puts in minimum effort, but someone called of God puts in maximum effort.
4. A volunteer sits back and complains about this and that bothering him, but someone called of God leads a personal campaign to improve that which needs improvement.
5. A volunteer feels threatened by the talent of others, but someone called of God feels secure in God's direction of his life.
6. A volunteer does no outside practicing or preparation (after all, he's just a volunteer), but someone who is called of God comes to rehearsals and performances as prepared as possible.
7. A volunteer wants to quit at the first sign of adversity or discouragement, but one called of God digs in and perseveres.
8. A volunteer is oblivious to the needs of his ministry, but someone called of God prays over the needs of his ministry.
9. A volunteer is more prone to jealousy of others, but one called of God praises God for distributing gifts and talents as He chooses.
10. A volunteer shrinks back from resolving relational conflict, but someone called of God seeks to resolve all relational conflict to preserve the unity of the team with which he serves.
11. A volunteer's main source of fulfillment is his talents and abilities, but someone called of God knows that being used of God is the most fulfilling thing he can do with his life.
12. A volunteer can't handle being put into situations where he's going to be "stretched," but someone called of God responds to God's call with humble dependence on Him.

Front Street Baptist Church's Purpose, Mission, & Vision

Our Purpose

To bring honor and glory to God in all we do

Our Mission

Transforming lives by the power of prayer and the Word

Our Vision

We exist to honor God by living transformed lives in fellowship as the body of Christ: worshiping, serving and growing together in Christ, confidently sharing the gospel of Christ in our community and beyond.

Front Street is a "Purpose Driven" church. The five purposes of the church are:

- Worship
- Fellowship
- Discipleship
- Ministry
- Evangelism

Success at Front Street is not measured by numerical growth but by helping each member be balanced in all five areas of their Christian walk.

At Front Street, every event, program, and organization is evaluated and updated to ensure purpose and quality. In the Worship Ministry, this is especially true. Every medium is continually refined, re-tooled, dropped, or added so the result will be relevant to every believer and seeker who attends our services.

Musical Styles

"If you try to please all of the people some of the time, you'll end up pleasing no one all of the time."

You will quickly see that Front Street sings a great deal of praise and worship, urban gospel, contemporary choruses, and hymns in a fresh, new way. Our music must relate to where these people live and must draw them to Jesus. Our objective is not to grow people's musical taste or appreciation. Without apology, our goal is to draw people to Jesus and help them to truly worship Him.

The Choir in the Contemporary Church

Most contemporary churches have dismissed the element of the choir and replaced it with praise teams on a weekly basis. The reasons include:

- Nowhere on the radio or in people's lives do we hear "choir music" played on a regular basis. This style and form is not relevant to the lifestyle of people in today's society.
- The choir is a high maintenance group that limits flexibility in the service and scheduling on a weekly basis.

At Front Street we are committed to the role of the choir, but not like you have known in the past. We are updating it to keep it fresh and new in the life of the contemporary church. Yes, it is a high maintenance area, only because it provides so many people with an outlet for service and ministry. Yes, it limits some of the flexibility in scheduling and variety in application, but the impact, both visually and musically, makes it worthwhile on a regular basis.

Here is a summary of applications used with the choir in our worship services:

- Our music is mostly celebrative with a message.
- We strive to touch the heart, not just stimulate the mind.
- The choir is contagious - the congregation will never express themselves corporately more than what the choir models for them.
- Solos or ensembles are used often in choir specials to add creativity, impact, and a personal touch. This format is relevant to today's society and musical culture.
- We strive for memory on a weekly basis. Eye contact and freedom of personal expression are very important in each service.

Why does the choir sing from memory?

The message of the song that we sing in worship has far greater impact when we get our heads out of the printed music and have our hands and faces free to worship as we sing. Memorizing most of the music we sing requires great commitment, yet the rewards are tremendous as we seek to lead people into the presence of God. We truly evoke worship in a greater way when we are free of the musical score. Memorizing is easy for some and difficult for others. The following is how we help you learn notes, rhythm, and words on a weekly basis and sing to the Lord!

- An anthem cassette or CD is available with the demos of all upcoming choir songs for the next several weeks. Play it in your car or at home as often as you can.

- We will rehearse the songs six weeks or more in advance on Wednesday nights. Repetition is the best natural teacher.

Special Note: There are weeks when we just can't pull off the musical demands of a certain song. Thus, we use music and folders. Please avoid "burying yourself" in the music.

The Rehearsal Experience

Most secular musical groups meet at least weekly for 2 - 3 hours filled with intense rehearsal. At Front Street, we do not have that luxury. Our people are pulled in numerous directions trying to balance home, job, and their Christian walk. The Army of Praise rehearsals hope to accomplish the following goals on a weekly basis:

- Provide an outlet of joy and fulfillment, away from your daily stresses.
- Help us to learn about worship, both corporate and private, and learn to be better worshippers.
- Provide a spiritual refueling through the texts of the songs and devotionals.
- Provide a bonding time of fellowship with other believers.
- Equip you with musical skills that will enhance your God-given talents.
- Teach expression, both individually and collectively, as we convey the celebration and relevance of the Christian Life.
- Provide a standard of excellence, both visually and vocally, which requires singing with your heart, not just your voice.

God sends us people with varied musical skills. **You do not have to read music** to join the choir. We simply place you near someone who does, and the corporate result greatly overrides any individual effort. With just an hour-and-twenty-minute rehearsal, time allowed for "beating out parts" is insufficient each Wednesday during rehearsal. This is where the Anthem CD plays an important role. Listen to it!

Wednesday evening rehearsal focuses on:

- Correcting problem areas in each song
- Polishing the song musically
- Discovering the text and purpose of each song
- Incorporating expression and confidence in every member

The Schedule: Wednesday from 7:40 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Our rehearsal time begins with singing worship music that is perhaps new to you. We are seeking to make the song part of our personal worship expression before introducing it to the congregation. It also gives us some time to slow down and focus our lives on God. We close this time with prayer and move into the rehearsal of upcoming anthems. We usually begin with some songs that need a good bit of work. Then we sing the anthem for Sunday, which should

really need only a sing-through with very few “fixes”. We follow that with additional songs in various stages of progression.

We try to work six or more weeks in advance. Some people believe that it is not necessary to attend choir rehearsal on the Wednesday before a Sunday that they will be away. Actually, very little work goes into that week’s anthem, much more goes into preparation for future Sundays.

The devotional and prayer time follows the musical portion of the rehearsal and is vital both to you and the choir family. Stay until the end of rehearsal, if possible. All of us can create a conflict each Wednesday if desired. You need the encouragement, and we need your support and commitment. God will honor this dedication as you make this group a priority in your ministry service.

The Procedure

As you enter the choir room across from the church offices, pick up the materials on the tables. You will find:

- **Rehearsal Notes:** Important information and announcements about upcoming events plus lyrics for Sunday’s song.
- **Box of Music:** assigned to each member, usually contains all the music you need for rehearsal.
- **Other Items:** Pick up any other items on the table in the choir room if instructed to do so.

After picking up the needed items, you should go to the Fellowship Hall for the choir rehearsal. Please arrive on time so that we can maximize our rehearsal time.

Seating Arrangement

Here is the vocal layout of the Army of Praise on Wednesday nights.

	LEFT SIDE		RIGHT SIDE
Row 4	I Soprano	Bass	II Alto
Row 3	I Soprano	Baritone	II Alto
Row 2	II Soprano	Tenor	I Alto
Row 1	II Soprano	Tenor	I Alto

Conductor's Stand

This arrangement is identical to the arrangement in the choir loft for Sunday worship.

Discipline

Though the concept is challenging at times, it is more fulfilling to calm down excited members than it is to breathe life into dead people. Bottom Line: Our people love to fellowship with each other. We are so grateful that members love to be with each other, but we must realize our time limitations.

Please remember the following:

- Always listen to Kenny as he gives direction and encouragement. (It helps to laugh at his jokes, too.)
- Remain quiet even when your section is not receiving specific vocal rehearsal.
- Try to refrain from continuous “one-liners” at inappropriate times. Even though it is truly funny, a joke at a serious moment can destroy a potential spiritual application.
- We will laugh together each Wednesday. We will work hard together each Wednesday. There will be a time for both.
- Never say you dislike a song we are rehearsing. If you have a particular problem with a song, please discuss it privately with Kenny.
- Try to sit up straight at all times. Crossing your legs limits breath support.
- Please respect “rehearsal in progress” when entering the rehearsal late. We must stay focused on our task at hand.
- Visitation with other members should be limited to before and after rehearsal.
- If you must leave early, please, slip out quietly.
- Whether a precious toddler or a persistent teenager, train your children not to interrupt you during rehearsal. Every entrance causes a disruption to some degree. Please relay this to your spouse and children.
- Encourage new members to sit next to you and help create a family atmosphere. Put purses and other items **under** your chair and not in adjoining seats.

Childcare

Childcare is provided each Wednesday evening. Your children will be loved and kept safe. Remind your children of the guidelines and limits provided by the childcare workers. Make it a fun experience for all!

Attendance & Commitment

Though the Army of Praise is a volunteer/non-paid organization, people join out of a God-given talent, desire, and calling. Remember this is a “skilled” area, not just a “service” area. It requires work, rehearsal, and refining which result in a worship-leading experience...the Sunday service. This happens every seven days. Our people know if we are prepared to share the gospel in song. Bottom line: it takes time, work, and commitment--just like every other area of your life. A half-hearted effort reflects a bad light on both you and our Lord. Giving Him your best is our goal!

Each choir member is expected to be at all scheduled rehearsals and arrive on time.

Due to parenting issues, vacations, sickness, and work conflicts, some rehearsals will have to be missed. In order to attain a high degree of excellence expected for this group, at least 90% or more average attendance for the year should be attained by each member, counting excused absences as being in attendance. Missing members slow down the progress not only of the absentee, but also the choir as a whole. If you cannot reasonably attend minimally 75% (in some rare cases, 65%) of rehearsals, *not counting excused absences*, you need to reconsider your involvement and find another area of ministry with less time requirements.

Many will need a “leave of absence” at some point, such as: pregnancy, workload, school, illness, etc. Upon notification, we will place you on our inactive roll and anticipate your return. Please indicate your projected return date. Please fill out a “Leave of Absence” form to give us as you notify us of this need in your life.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

At times, work schedule, family conflicts, or illness may prevent you from attending choir rehearsal or Sunday worship. These absences will be excused if you notify the worship office prior to your absence (see “When You Are Gone, Let Us Know” section). If you do not give us advanced notice, the absence will be considered “unexcused.” While this system may seem a bit legalistic, it will help hold each of us accountable to our commitment and calling and will encourage us to be faithful in our attendance.

When You Are Gone, Let Us Know!

When missing a rehearsal or Sunday worship, each choir member is expected to contact Kenny Lamm or the church office **in advance** of the date that will be missed or as soon as possible. Contact may be made in person, by telephone, by voice mail, or by e-mail. Please give the reason for your absence. For routine absences, such as vacation or work conflicts, e-mail would be preferred. When a special need prevents your attendance, please call and let us know so that we can join you in prayer for these needs. This will help Kenny to be aware of any needs in your life that may hinder you from being present (prayer concerns) and will help all of us be accountable. Each person is important to our work!

You may e-mail Kenny at klamm@frontstreet.org. You may also call Donna Bishop, administrative assistant, at (704) 871-0898, ext. 214, or Kenny at extension 107.

Let us know of any of the following:

- Upcoming Wednesday and Sunday absences
- Upcoming surgery
- Extended Leave of Absence
- Prayer Requests
- Prospects
- Communication to Choir Officers
- Inreach needs

Communication

Please keep your e-mail address and other contact information current by filling out a contact form anytime a change occurs. We regularly send out e-mail information. Communication also takes place through the weekly rehearsal sheet given at choir each Wednesday evening. A great source for much information of the worship ministry is at our web site, www.AudienceOfOne.org. There is a member's only section that provides upcoming event information, weekly worship outlines, upcoming sermon topics, anthems, drama, and other worship elements. Digital music files (mp3) can be downloaded from the site for you to listen to upcoming anthems. To access the site, e-mail Kenny (klamm@frontstreet.org) or Donna (donna@frontstreet.org) for logon information.

Annual Worship Leader Retreat

The choir and instrumentalists go away for an overnight retreat each year, usually in late August or September. Each choir member is encouraged to attend this event. Our annual retreat is a wonderful time of fellowship as we get away and spend time with each other and with God—away from the hustle and bustle of our busy lives—a time to find refreshment. We enjoy great times of rehearsal and continue to learn about and understand our role as worship leaders at Front Street Baptist Church. There will be times to share together what God is doing in the worship ministry at Front Street. Worship Leader Retreats are great fun and really bring our group together.

The Worship Experience

The Sunday service is where all of our combined efforts come to the forefront. Remember our goal is to lead other people in worship, not just perform a four-minute song. Once again, you are a vital and visible part of our services. Prepare yourself individually as we prepare you corporately. SMILE! SMILE! SMILE! Be expressive, not just with your face, but also with your whole heart, body, mind, and soul. We long for authentic worship. You must worship personally before you can genuinely lead others to the throne of God.

Warm-Up

You need to be in the Fellowship Hall **no later** than 15 minutes before service time. Here's the present schedule:

10:00 (5 min.) Arrive with robe and music, if required (those that can arrive earlier should do so since our choir room is so small).

10:05 (5 min.) Run through song

10:10 (2 min.) Prayer/Announcements

10:12 (3 min.) Go to sanctuary and enter Choir Loft

10:15 Service begins

It is hard not to stop to visit with friends or to excuse yourself from a conversation, but remember your priority for this given time slot. Any fellow believer will understand and support you as he honors your area of service and commitment. You will find that we will regularly need to support and help each other as choir members when we find ourselves in awkward positions. Reach out and stay focused on the task at hand.

How do I get to the Choir Loft?

Good Luck (not really). The maze can be complicated as you make your first attempts. Before leaving warm-up, you will be placed on a row. The person on the end of the row, depending upon which direction that particular row goes, will lead you to the loft and enter from one of three entrances.

Miscellaneous

- Purses: Purses are locked in the ladies robe room each Sunday morning during the worship service. You may also choose to take your purse to the loft (holding it against your side away from congregation when entering) and place it underneath your seat.
- Kenny will give you the signal for standing and sitting...well, most of the time. He will also signal when to clap along during the choir song.
- Perfume and cologne is a huge “No-No,” but deodorant and mouthwash are a wonderful “Yes-Yes!”

Soloists and Ensembles

Front Street is truly a church blessed with talent and ability. One has said “talent breeds talent.” This is true. When people with musical desires visit our services, they want to join the Worship Ministry Family. **We want and need you to join us!** Just make sure your decision and motives are pure. At your previous church, your “platform time” may have been much more than what it will be here at Front Street. This isn’t necessarily a non-spiritual issue, for all of us deal daily with human nature. Front Street’s distinct musical styles call for more frequent use of certain voices and styles than others. Be patient, and don’t let pride have its way! Our goal is to give you an outlet for service, but your only true fulfillment can come from Jesus himself. Enjoy the Army of Praise to the maximum, and wait for other opportunities to arise.

Solo and Ensemble Song Selection Philosophy

All solo and ensemble songs are pre-selected weeks (at times, just days) in advance. Once the song is selected, it is matched to a voice, not to a person. This is why some people sing more often than others. It is what the song dictates.

On Wednesdays (WOW), the song schedule is a soloist rotation. Feel free to sing any song God lays on your heart. This service is geared for believers, and they will love to hear you share your heart in song. Because of time restraints, please defer from personal testimonies unless you wish to talk during the introduction.

Soloist and Ensemble Member Selection Philosophy

The Worship Pastor is responsible for all results and evaluations of the music for each service. Whatever happens ultimately falls back on him, positively or negatively. His hardest decisions are not between good and bad, but between what is good and what is best. He must rely solely on God’s leadership and direction. Some people are gifted with choir voices, some ensemble voices, and some solo voices. The degree of these differs in individuals as they move from church to church. At Front Street, the standards may be different from these in other churches. Please re-focus your motive on serving God as He opens the doors. Be content that you have the privilege to lead people in praise and worship each week through the powerful medium of the Army of Praise.

The Selection Process

The first step is to let Kenny know of your interest in solos and ensembles. He will then ask you to bring a solo track of your choice to sing for him. Sing your song for him and share with him your dreams and goals. Share your musical styles and vocal range. Remember to provide him with a personal solo and solo track inventory/list. This will help him greatly in future planning.

Praise Teams serve primarily at the Grace Fellowship at the Lake campus and occasionally at the Front Street campus. Selection for these ensembles is by an interview process as well.

Note the following suggestions:

- All solos are memorized! Communication is vital as you convey the message of Christ. Stay away from lyric sheets. You will stare at them even when you don't realize it.
- Be genuinely expressive, and plan movement on stage at scheduled times during the song. Inform light crew of planned staging.
- Smile and look directly at the people. Don't sing the entire song with eyes closed.
- Keep the microphone close to your chin. Never hold it more than 4 to 6 inches away from the chin and below your mouth.
- Do not hold the microphone cable when singing. It comes across to the congregation as a crutch or insecurity. Before you sing, during the introduction, make sure you have enough slack in the cable; then let go of it. Though you can't fully re-set it, please return all excess cable to the preset area and help keep our platform clean.
- Communicate openly, yet politely with the sound crew, letting them know your monitor needs. We are all on the same team.
- Ladies, dress very modestly. A fashion statement is not as important as remembering that several hundred people are intently watching you. The focus should be on the ministry of your song, not your dress. Stay clear of slits and form fitting clothing. No skirts should be worn without slips.
- Guys, remember that button shirts compliment our bodies more than golf shirts.
- No hats should be worn.
- Seek out Kenny for any platform instructions and guidance.

Choir Outfits

For Sunday Services

Some Sundays, our choir will wear choir robes. Some Sundays, especially during the summer months, the choir will not wear robes. On those occasions, please remember to wear clothing that is both modest and cool. Ladies should not wear short skirts or other clothing which would draw attention to oneself. Men may wear anything from nice casual (no jeans or shorts) to a suit without wearing clothing that draws attention to oneself. Remember, God is our “Audience of One.”

For Special Concerts and Productions

At these events, a uniform look is desired for both a visual blending and dramatic effect. We will either wear robes or an outfit, depending on the nature of the event.

Robes:

A choir robe is assigned to each member. Please see our robe coordinator (Louise Caskaddon) for an assignment.

Outfit:

The ladies have a black skirt and a white lace top for these occasions. Cost is presently \$55 for the lace top and \$30 for the skirt. Each lady is responsible for any hemming of the skirt and the upkeep of the outfit.

The men wear a standard tuxedo vest, shirt, black pants, and a banded bow tie. The present cost for the vest, shirt, and tie is \$45. Adjustable waist tux pants are available for \$32.

Choir outfits are generally worn about twice a year.

Choir Dues

Choir dues are used to purchase cards and gifts to minister to and celebrate with choir members and leaders in times of sorrow and times of celebration. Suggested choir dues are \$1.00 per month, payable to the choir treasurer.

The Army of Praise Officers

There are several people who long to see this ministry grow and help you grow with us. The present officers are:

- **President:** “spokesman” for the choir and leader of choir council.
- **Outreach Leader:** assembling all prospects’ cards, making contacts, following up on contacts, and introducing new members into the choir family.
- **Membership Secretaries:** supervising of roll each Wednesday and Sunday plus upkeep of picture display board.
- **Social Chairperson:** meal preparation and decorations for all choir events.
- **Section Leaders:** There are six people who are responsible for the inreach ministry of the Army of Praise. They will keep in touch with you and make Kenny aware of any special needs of our members.
- **Robe Chairperson/Treasurer/Librarian:** assigns a choir robe to each member, accounts for choir dues, and makes sure needed items (bulletins, music, etc.) are ready for Sunday worship.

So, How Do I Join?

When visiting rehearsal for the first time, we realize you are just “checking us out!” The choir president or another officer will ask you to fill out a guest card so we may have the honor of introducing you and following up with a phone call from one of the officers. Upon your second visit you may wish to go ahead and join the choir family. You will need to do the following:

- Submit a Choir Membership Application
- Fill out a Contact Information Form
- Have a picture taken for the membership display board
- Embrace the philosophy and purposes explained in this handbook
- Commit to the previously outlined attendance goals (see page 13)

Feel free to join in and begin singing on Sunday when you are ready. See “The Worship Experience” for these details.

Where Does Your Worship Choir Get Its Name?

In times of warfare today, it has become conventional practice that the "front line" of offense will be an aerial attack with bombs and missiles. How different from the days of the Old Testament when God's people went into battle being led by singers and musicians who declared the praises of God. In II Chronicles 20: 21 & 22 we read of King Jehoshaphat's decision when facing a "vast army" of Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites. Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful." After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying:

"Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever."

As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.

This story takes place many years after the reign of King David. However, in Psalm 68 which is ascribed to David, we read of his praise to God for victory in a similar situation and where it appears the choir led the procession into battle: May God arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him. As smoke is blown away by the wind, may you blow them away; as wax melts before the fire, may the wicked perish before God. But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful. Surely God will crush the heads of his enemies, the hairy crowns of those who go on in their sins... The Lord says, "I will bring them from Bashan; I will bring them from the depths of the sea, that you may plunge your feet in the blood of your foes, while the tongues of your dogs have their share. Your procession has come into view, O God, the procession of my God and King. In front are the singers, after them the musicians; with them are the maidens playing tambourines. Praise God in the great congregation; praise the LORD in the assembly of Israel.

Why do you suppose the choir was in front? Because it was an acknowledgment that the battle belonged to the Lord. Because the first thing we must acknowledge is that the true power is God's, and we do that through praise and worship. We have heard the statement, "there is power in praise," and the children of Israel (at least at this point in their history) practiced it.

The church is continually at war, although "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers." (Ephesians 6:12) It's time the ministry of music is viewed with highest value and prime importance in the battle of the church and the world. Maybe when we say "the choir bombed this morning" we should be speaking positively!

Adapted from an article by Dave Leeman President, International Music Net

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. The Worship Ministry and Army of Praise hope you will join us immediately. There is no greater joy than seeing people coming to Christ and growing in their faith. Our success is not based on number or musical ability but on leading our people into the presence of God. It's freeing and powerful to worship with people you know well and you know care about you.

