



# Grace Chapel Ringers Expectations and Explanations Guide

## Who can join the handbell choir?

Anyone high school age and older who is able to read rhythm notation may join the ensemble.

## What about ability and experience?

Previous ringing experience is not necessary, but it is helpful! The ensemble is a reflection of the church and is made up of individuals with varying abilities. While you might not be sure where you fit yet, remember that this is a gathering of the church. Allison will meet with each prospective musician to determine musical background, strengths, current playing ability, and the best fit for you. One of the most exciting things about handbells and handchimes is that new techniques and ideas for the instrument are being developed all the time, and we have the opportunity to learn these together. In this group you will be trained and encouraged, in this case towards musical excellence for the glory of God and the joy of others. We are committed to *musical excellence*, which we define as “*continually becoming better than I once was.*”

## What is the time commitment?

### *Rehearsals*

Thursday nights, 6:00-7:30pm in Rooms B & C.

The semesters run September-December and January-May.

Expect to be present for at least 75% of rehearsals to make a meaningful contribution. It is important to have consistency within the group; *we truly rely on each other!* We use the term *Downbeat* for the official start to a music event. Please be in place and ready to ring by downbeat. *Call Time* is the suggested time to show up before downbeat.

### *Personal Practice*

Practice time at home is vital. We are committed to being fully engaged with the music and embodying the message we are communicating through song. Each ensemble member is provided with a folder of the sheet music that you may take and study at home. While it is not possible for everyone to take their bells and chimes with them after rehearsal, “ghost ringing” is a very useful method of practicing. You are encouraged on your own time to read your music and use ringing motions with spoons, hairbrushes, etc. Think of it this way: *you learn your part at home and learn everyone else’s parts at rehearsal; practice is personal and rehearsal is relational.* You are also welcome to schedule additional time to work with your bells at the church outside of regular rehearsal.

### *Ringling in Church & Seasonal Events*

When we ring in church you are expected to serve at all of the weekend services. It is very difficult to cover a missing handbell position. If you have a conflict with this commitment, please talk with Allison. We ring at two to four events each semester. These may include playing in one of the small groups, joining one of our sister churches, touring local convalescent homes, and taking part in special seasonal events.

### *Seasonal Events*

We enjoy performing in the annual *Night of Joy* Christmas program each December and special services at Easter time. All of these are planned well in advance so that times and details are communicated clearly at the beginning of the season.

## **How do you organize all this?**

*Planning Center Online* is the system we use to organize our people, music, rehearsals, and services. It works through your email and allows you access to rehearsal plans and recordings to help you succeed at learning the music. Scheduling through Planning Center will help you stay on top of where you need to be, and when. There is a free app available for iOS and Android. We send you weekly update emails on what we're focusing on for the next rehearsal and reminders on times for handbell events.

## **What does the ensemble wear?**

For rehearsals, come as you are. For worship services and other events, wear all black and remember your black performance gloves. These gloves will protect the bells and your hands. Gloves are ordered through the church early in the rehearsal season.

Here is a detailed rundown of what we're looking for:

### **Gentlemen**

#### *Solid Black Dress Shirt*

Long sleeve, button down, collared dress shirt tucked in.

No logos, prints, or patterns, please.

#### *Black Slacks*

Dockers style pants are acceptable. Black belt.

No navy blue, gray, denim, or cargos, please.

#### *Shoes*

Black shoes with black socks. Shoes should be in good repair, able to hold a shine.

### **Ladies**

#### *Long Sleeved Blouse/Top*

No T-shirts, spaghetti strap tank tops, or hooded shirts.

No logos, prints, or patterns, please.

#### *Skirt/Pants*

Black; no navy blue, no gray, no denim. No shorts or cut-offs. Please remember that the congregation is looking up at the stage; therefore skirts or dresses must cover the knees when seated.

#### *Shoes*

Black, with black or natural stockings. Sandals are acceptable but require a heel strap.