

Handbook of
The Choir of Men and Boys - Founded 1894
The Girls' Choir – Founded 1994

Grace Church in New York

Mission Statement:

A community for everyone celebrating excellence in music and God's love for all!

The Motto of the Royal School of Church Music in America:

“I will sing with the spirit and with the understanding also.”.....I Corinthians 14: 15

Grace Church in New York affiliated on 14 February 1961

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I. Introduction

Mission Statement

The Grace Church Choir Program seeks to sustain and strengthen the rich tradition of choral offerings at Grace Church by fostering a community for everyone celebrating excellence in music and God's love for all. The Choir Program welcomes singers and musicians who desire to celebrate and extend this ministry undertaken by Grace Church.

Four Virtues of Choristers

These virtues are based on the Baptismal Covenant as found on pages 292-294 of The Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church, and the two commandments identified by Jesus Christ as the greatest: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." Matthew 22: 37-40.

Courtesy. The most important virtue of a Chorister is Courtesy toward God, or reverence. Choristers express their reverence of God through careful preparation for the worship of God, which the choir assists in leading (not only in music but also in spoken responses, prayer, and silence), through good behavior before and during worship, and by showing respect for Churches and Church yards. Choristers also behave with common courtesy and good manners toward one another, and all people, in keeping with the baptismal vow to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being." During worship and rehearsals, please do as you are asked by the Choirmaster, Optimus/Optima or Lead Choristers; they are there to help you do your best.

Dependability. You are important. A Chorister is someone who can be counted on. Our tradition rests on faithful, regular leadership of worship Sunday after Sunday. This necessitates equally faithful practice. It is impossible to plan ahead if we do not know who is going to show up. Please be on time for rehearsals and services. We have a very short amount of time to prepare a great amount of material and to enjoy each other's company. **REMEMBER:** come or call.

Silence. A choir must learn to be quiet before it can fill in the quiet with beautiful music. Trying to make music against a background of noise is like throwing diamonds and rubies into a pail of mud. Never talk while work is in progress unless you are called on. Whenever you hear music, whether from the piano or voices, quiet down and listen to it.

Attention. Physicians and scientists who study the brain say that we generally use only a small fraction of it. We are all smarter than we usually show. When you are working, make a habit of concentrating, applying as much of your brain as possible. You will be amazed at how quickly you can learn when you stretch your mind to take it in. One useful thing you can learn from the choir is how to concentrate, take a break, and immediately concentrate again. Good posture is helpful to the mind as well as the body. Hold your music properly so that you can look at the conductor and are not singing into the floor. This will be easy if you do it from the very first rehearsal.

A Daily Prayer for Choristers

BLESS, O LORD, us thy servants who minister in thy temple; grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

II. Program

Levels

General. The Boys' and Girls' Choirs is a three-tiered program: Novices, Junior Choristers and Senior Choristers.

Novices. First year Choristers are Novices.

.....Membership. Membership is open to third and fourth graders or any new Choristers.

.....Schedule. Novice Choristers rehearse on Thursday afternoons.

.....Offerings. Novice Choristers sit in choir and support the hymn singing at School Chapels. Novice Choristers also participate in the Christmas Pageant and are required to participate in the Required Special Offerings described in the Schedules.

.....Sunday Services. Novice Choristers are strongly encouraged, but not required (except on specified Required Sundays), to participate in the 11 am Sunday Service, where they may vest, process, support the congregational hymn singing and recess with the Senior Choristers, but will be seated in the front pews of the church rather than in the choir stalls. On Required Sundays, which are identified in the Schedules, Novices are required to participate in Sunday Services.

.....Description. The Novice Choristers focus on basic musicianship and vocal skills. We will focus on School Chapel Hymns and Hymns and Service Music in this first year.

.....Stipend/Scholarship. Novices receive a Stipend, a Bonus for Sunday Services attended and a Novice Scholarship of \$100.

Junior Choristers. Junior Choristers support the expanded ministry of the choir.

.....Membership. Membership is open to Choristers who have been Novices for at least one year and demonstrate the maturity and skill suitable for becoming a Junior Chorister. A Lead Chorister for each choir (Boys'/Girls') may be named each year.

.....Schedule. Junior Choristers rehearse at the weekday morning times only on Thursday mornings (for the boys) and Friday mornings (for the girls).

.....Offerings. Junior Choristers sit in choir and support the hymn singing at School Chapels. The Boy and Girl Junior Choristers will offer Evensong together on Tuesday evenings at 6:00. There will be a 5 pm call to vest and prepare. The service will last 30 minutes. The after activities will conclude at 6:30 pm. Junior Choristers must also participate in the Required Special Offerings described in the Schedules.

.....Sunday Services. Junior Choristers are strongly encouraged, but not required (except on specified Required Sundays), to participate in the 11 am Sunday Service, where they may vest, process, support the congregational hymn singing and recess with the Senior

Choristers, but will be seated in the front pews of the church rather than in the choir stalls. On Required Sundays, which are identified in the Schedule, Junior Choristers are required to participate in Sunday Services in order to offer an anthem. On Required Sundays, Junior Choristers should arrive at 9:45 a.m. with the Senior Choristers for the 10 am call.

.....Description. The goal of the Junior Chorister program is to teach musicianship, expanded vocal skills and repertoire and to act as the training choir for the Senior Chorister level.

.....Stipend/Scholarship. The Junior Choristers receive a Stipend, a Bonus for Sunday Services attended and a Junior Scholarship of \$200.

Senior Choristers. Senior Choristers support the Sunday morning ministry of the choir and other public offerings of the choir.

.....Membership. This level is by audition only. An Optimus and Optima will be named each year.

.....Schedule. Senior Choristers rehearse at the weekday morning times, but in general separately from the Junior Choristers. They also rehearse on all Sunday afternoons (1 to 3 pm) on Sundays at which they sing in the morning service.

.....Offerings/Sunday Services. The Senior Choristers sing most Sunday morning services and all public performance opportunities of the choirs. They sit in choir and support the hymn singing at School Chapels. Senior Choristers also participate in all of the Required Special Offerings described in the Schedules.

.....Voice Study. Senior Choristers are required to participate in the vocal study program described elsewhere in this handbook and again on choir family area of the website.

.....Description. The goal of the Senior Chorister program is to create a small group of advanced Choristers to do the public “professional” singing with the adult choir professionals. Senior Choristers are expected to make a significant commitment to the choir, analogous to the commitment made to a varsity sport.

.....Stipend/Scholarship. Senior Choristers receive a Stipend and a Senior Scholarship of \$1,000.

Officers

.....Optimus/Optima. This office is unique to the Choirs of Grace Church. In other choirs this office is often referred to as Head Chorister or Head Boy or Head Girl. The Optimus/Optima is a Chorister who through hard work and outstanding attendance models the highest musical and leadership skills and sets an example for the rest of the choir community. This person need not be the best solo voice: being in a choir is not about being a soloist, it is the work of the community as a team that is the priority. This person is the one who unites our team and sets the standard for the highest level of achievement possible. Accepting this position requires the Chorister to arrive ten minutes early for rehearsal and, except when school follows, will require the Chorister to remain to assist in helping everyone follow through on their responsibilities.

.....Lead Chorister. The Lead Chorister is head Chorister for the Junior Choristers. Together, the Lead Chorister and the Optimus/Optima assist the Choirmaster in the organization of the choir, in helping to guide the behavior of the community and in challenging us all to meet our potential as a team. Accepting this position requires the Chorister to arrive ten minutes early for rehearsal and, except when school follows, will require the Chorister to remain to assist in helping everyone follow through on their responsibilities, clean up the areas we have been using, and depart in a joyful/appropriate manner!

.....Head Librarian and Assistant Librarians. The Head and Assistant Librarians work with the Choirmaster to make sure everyone has their music and any other tools necessary for performance and rehearsal. The Head Librarian works to enable the highest quality-working environment to be established. Accepting this position requires the Chorister to arrive ten minutes early for rehearsal and except when school follows, will require the Chorister to remain to help clean up and put materials away following rehearsals and services.

.....Clerk of the Choir. This is the person who keeps the roll and works with the Choirmaster to make sure all record keeping is accurate. This is very important as awards, promotions, bonuses/fines, stipends and scholarships are based on these records. Accepting this position requires the Chorister to arrive ten minutes early for rehearsal and except when school follows, will require the Chorister to remain to help finish up roll book and other record keeping materials.

Stipends and Scholarships

.....Stipends - General. We follow a system of ranking based on musical instruction and accomplishment. The aim is to make each Chorister as complete a musician as possible. Rather than automatic promotions at special times of the year, promotion will be given each individual as skills and repertoire are learned. These promotions are celebrated in the colored ribbons that the boys and girls wear with the medal of the RSCM. Both choirs wear the same colored ribbons and medals celebrating the same expectations for achievement. Each Chorister will be given a number following every rehearsal and service. These numbers will be displayed on the “standards” chart in the hallway outside the Music Room. Standards aid us in seeing the progress being made by each Chorister. These standards are assigned by the Choirmaster. The standards are not a grade, they are offered to let the Chorister know how well he/she is doing based on their potential.

.....Stipends – Standards.

.....3 points per rehearsal or service is the normal rating

.....one for attendance

.....one for solid work

.....one for good behavior and care of materials including vestments.

.....2 points will indicate that one of the above factors is lacking

.....1 point or zero may be given if a Chorister is both late and unconscientious or if his/her conduct is detrimental to the efficiency and morale of the group.

.....4-6 points will be awarded for exceptionally good effort or special work well done.

.....X means excused absence. Please let the Choirmaster know in advance when absences are coming and they may be marked excused. If the absence is due to illness, please call and let the Choirmaster know so the absence can be marked excused.

.....In multiples of 3, extra rating points will achieve a bonus, while negative ones will receive a fine. A rating of 6 would give the Chorister a bonus of one extra rehearsal pay, while a rating of 0 would subtract one rehearsal pay from their total.

.....Stipends - Salary. Choristers receive a salary following the schedule described below, with standard pay per rehearsal and a bonus per service.

Rank/ Pay Per Rehearsal/ Bonus Per Service

Novice/ \$.50/ \$1.00

Junior Chorister/ \$.60/ \$1.05

Light Blue Ribbon/ \$.65/ \$1.15

Dark Blue Ribbon/ \$.75/ \$1.35

Red Ribbon/ \$.95/ \$1.55

Purple Ribbon/ \$1.40/ \$2.00

.....Stipends - Extra Salary.

Optimus and Optima/ \$3.00 per week

Lead Choristers/ \$2.50 per week

Head Librarian/ \$2.00 per week

Assistant Librarian/ \$2.00 per week

Clerk/ \$2.00 per week

Perfect Attendance/ \$5.00 per pay period

Finders / Senior Mentors Bonus/ \$25.00 per new chorister

.....Stipends – Payment. Choir Salaries will be given out at the end of December, and the end of the school year in June. All payments will be made by check and sent home by mail.

.....Scholarships. Choir Scholarships will be made by check payable to the Chorister's family in the amount specified for the Chorister level where the Chorister sings for the entire year. The Scholarship may be modified should the Chorister not sing the entire season. Penalties applicable to the Scholarship for absences are described in the Code of Conduct (below).

.....Awards. The Choirmaster may, in his discretion, make awards to Choristers at appropriate occasions during the choir season.

Professional Personnel

In recent years, the Choirmaster has been supported by a professional staff that has included a Music Intern and, in certain years, an Assistant Organist. At this time we continue the arrangement from recent seasons that saw all staff positions frozen. The current arrangement includes only two positions, Organ and Master of Choristers and the Artist-in-Residence. The remaining frozen positions will be reconsidered as the economy grows and the budget of the program can revisit these resources.

CHORISTER VOICE STUDY PROGRAM

PURPOSE:

To increase each chorister's knowledge and vocal ability in a group setting and

apply that knowledge to the work and repertoire of the choir.

Repertoire will focus on Hymn Descants, Choir Solo Repertoire and Special Solo Repertoire.

SENIOR CHORISTERS:

To fulfill the senior voice study requirement, senior choristers will sign

up for 6 voice "class" sessions in the fall and 10 sessions in the winter/spring.

These classes will be offered by P. Allen

Each session will last one hour, there is no charge.

Parents are encouraged to make a donation to the choir special projects fund to help support this program.

Soprano Classes will be offered on

Tuesday

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

There will be a cyber or traditional sign up method for reserving a space in a class

to make sure classes don't become too big. However, there will be some

flexibility with this.

Classes will take place in the Music Office.

Should no one

be signed up for a given date, no class will occur.

**No student should just sign up
on the day of a class should the schedule be empty,
however, if a class already has
students registered last minute walk ins are welcome.**

**“Shaving Club” Class for boys whose voices have changed
will be required each**

**Friday from 2:15 – 3:15 p.m. Boys whose voices have
changed will be excused**

**from all morning (soprano) rehearsals and attend the
Friday after school**

**class/rehearsal instead to focus on the particular needs of
the boy with a**

changing/changed voice.

JUNIOR AND NOVICE CHORISTERS:

**Are encouraged to sign up to attend the voice classes, but
there is no requirement**

for participation.

DETAILS

All Choristers will still have the opportunity to schedule private voice lessons as they and their parents have interest and the voice teacher(s) have time to provide. This could include extra lessons at times of increased productivity around special concerts, shows and other solo opportunities. To receive the name of a voice teacher and arrange for this option please talk with P. Allen.

Trips, Special Projects and Recordings

Everyone loves to take trips such as the Choir Festivals that took us to New Haven and Fairfield, the Residency in Bristol and the choir trips to Amsterdam and Rome. And everyone loves the excitement of making recordings! With the support of our families we are very fortunate to continue planning and making these opportunities to travel and record possible. Each Chorister enables the choirs to achieve these goals by working to make our musical offerings the highest quality every time we gather here at home for rehearsal or service.

.....Choir Trips. The most recent choir trips included the Senior Choristers traveling to Italy in the Summer of 2010 and The Netherlands in June of 2007. The entire choir community came together magnificently for this inspiring week of singing and team building! We expect to continue our tradition of giving choristers an opportunity to do choir trips. Our goal is to do another trip to Europe in 2012. As plans develop, the Choirmaster will discuss them with the community.

.....Special Projects. From time to time the choirs have the opportunity to engage in special projects. As potential projects arise and are developed with the Choir Steering Committee the entire community will communicate to determine feasibility of individual opportunities and requirements for participation.

.....Recording Projects. The new website has provided a location to make recordings of the choir available to the greater community. At the moment these recordings are limited to special projects, but it is hoped this will be expanded to every musical offering of the choirs. A broader recording program, as well as the required funding to support it, needs to be developed as we grow our musical skills and delivery to be worthy of a professional-quality recording each season: one by boys, one by girls, one by adults and eventually one by organists. The recordings will enhance the choirs' outreach and ministry.

III. Code of Conduct

Attendance

.....General. While each person is missed when absent, it is recognized that occasionally this may be necessary. It is not difficult to have an absence excused. We have concern for you and also need to be efficient.

.....Please contact the Music Office (212.254.2000/110 or helfensteinch@yahoo.com) if you know you have to be away or if you are ill and cannot be with us.

.....If you forgot or were unable to call, please call the next day, so we know how you are doing and can support you in the best manner possible. If you know in advance that an absence is necessary, please call or write the Music Office.

.....Please do not take unnecessary chances when dangerous weather is in the area. To find out if a rehearsal or service has been cancelled check the website. When in doubt if GCS cancels or has a late opening due to weather or other unforeseen situation, choir will not take place. www.gracechurchnyc.org and www.gcschool.org.

Senior Choristers:

.....Sunday Services. Attendance at the Sunday service (9:45 arrival, 10 am warm-up and 11 am service) is required for all Senior Choristers, as is timely arrival and departure.

.....A Senior Chorister may miss one Sunday service or other required choir performance in the fall and one in the spring AND may have a late arrival or early departure up to two times in the fall and two times in the spring.

.....For each additional Sunday service or other required choir performance missed, there will be a \$50.00 deduction from the Scholarship.

.....For each additional late arrival or early departure, there will be a \$5.00 deduction from the Scholarship.

.....Sunday Afternoon Rehearsals. Attendance at Sunday afternoon rehearsals (1 pm to 3 pm) is required for all Senior Choristers, as is timely arrival and departure.

.....A Senior Chorister may miss one Sunday afternoon rehearsal in the fall and one in the spring AND may have a late arrival or early departure up to two times in the fall and two times in the spring.

.....For each additional Sunday afternoon rehearsal missed, there will be a \$25.00 deduction from the Scholarship.

.....For each additional late arrival or early departure, there will be a \$5.00 deduction from the Scholarship.

.....Excessive Sunday Absences. If a Senior Chorister misses

.....a total of four Sunday services or other required choir performances OR

.....four Sunday afternoon rehearsals OR

.....a combination of four of both, then the Senior Chorister's parents will meet with the Choirmaster to have a discussion about whether the choice to be a Senior Chorister best serves the family's needs.

.....Weekday Morning Rehearsals. Attendance at weekday morning rehearsals is required for all Senior Choristers, as is timely arrival and departure.

.....A Senior Chorister may miss four weekday morning rehearsals in the fall and four in the spring AND may have a late arrival or early departure up to four times in the fall and four times in the spring.

.....For each additional weekday morning rehearsal missed, there will be a \$10.00 deduction from the Scholarship.

.....For each additional late arrival or early departure, there will be a \$5.00 deduction from the Scholarship.

.....If a Chorister has excessive absences from weekday morning rehearsals, the Choirmaster will have a discussion with the Chorister and/or the Chorister's parents about the family's choir participation commitment.

.....Excused Absences. Excused absences for illness (with a parent's contact with the Choirmaster) or conflicting school activities (with a parent's advance notice to the Choirmaster) will not count as missed for this attendance policy.

.....Dates of Required Attendance. It is essential that all Senior Choristers sing the dates listed in the annual schedule as REQUIRED, for which there will be no excused absences other than illness. They are summarized as:

.....October – Evensong – Rejoice in the Lamb (Boys Only)

.....November – Thanksgiving Service for Grace Church School

.....November – Grace Church School Sunday Morning Service

.....December – Evensong – Ceremony of Carols Evensong (Girls Only)

.....December – Annual Community Carol Sing

.....December – Rehearsal and Performance of the Annual Christmas Eve Service

.....April – Saturday Rehearsal and Sunday Offering of Easter Morning Service with Brass

.....April – Rehearsals and Performance of the Annual Concert

.....June – Grace Church School Graduation

Should you be aware of a situation that requires an excuse for one of the above events, it should be negotiated with the Choirmaster prior to committing to the choir year.

.....Chorister Preparation. If a Chorister misses rehearsals of a specific offering or piece of repertoire and is not fully prepared to support the choir in its realization, the Chorister should not feel penalized if asked not to sing that item until it is properly learned. This is not a disciplinary situation (you can't run a play you don't know) and there would be no other financial penalty other than that connected to the attendance policy above. Just as there is flexibility for the person, there must be care and support of the choir's ability to offer its repertoire with the utmost care and preparation.

.....Leave of Absence. When a Chorister needs to take time off to improve family relationships, to improve school work or for fatigue, need to rest/heal, then a leave of absence may be granted by the Choirmaster. This is a much more positive way to support the Chorister, the family, the school and the morale and work of the choir. Facing such a situation no one needs more pressure placed on them by just missing or disappearing and it allows the whole community to be supported while appropriate time away is granted. One can then return with a clean slate ready to pick up where they left

off. Once the length of the leave of absence is determined, we will negotiate the appropriate change to the amount of the Scholarship.

Church Conduct

.....Treatment of Music. Music is assigned to each Chorister by number. This means that during your time in the choir you will always receive your copy of a composition to be prepared and offered. It is essential that everyone treat the music with care so that it may last over generations of Choristers. Some of the music we use has been in service for over sixty years! Any unnecessary roughness with music either through rough handling or improper storage in cubbies will result in a fine for the offence. The amount will be appropriate to the infraction and may include the replacement value of the music.

All Choristers

Dress Code for Services and Offerings. Appropriate Sunday clothes with dark shoes.

.....Boys

.....Dark dress shoes (no sneakers) with dark socks.

.....White collared shirt and tie.

.....Black or navy pants (no khaki please).

.....Girls

.....Black or navy dress shoes (please no sneakers, open-toed shoes, sandals, clogs or flip flops).

.....White, black or navy socks or tights or nude-colored hose.

.....Dress or skirt that is appropriate for church.

.....No collar showing above the cassock except a simple white collar.

.....No noticeable hair ornaments.

.....Choir Clothes Closet. If you are in need of assistance with appropriate clothing, please bring this to the attention of the Choirmaster, as there is a "Choir Closet" with appropriate clothing available for check out. As the Choristers grow, the "Choir Closet" would be very happy to accept donations of appropriate articles of clothing for future generations to use.

.....Rehearsal Drill. Since March of 2000 daily practice has occurred in the Church, weather and construction permitting. The alternate sites are the Music Room, Music Office, Honor Room and Chantry. Please arrive soon enough to be in your place at 7:20 am bringing appropriate rehearsal folder, pencil, hymnal and any other required materials with you.

It is wonderful seeing so many parents bringing their children to choir and school. We have been very fortunate with the safety of our young people. Thank you for all that you do to keep this environment so safe and supportive for our continued good study and well-being.

For morning rehearsals we continue to enter the building at the 802 Broadway entrance. There will be someone answering the door up until rehearsal begins. After that time, please ring the bell and be patient for someone to answer and let you in or if GCS has opened, enter at that time through the school.

Parents please remember that the church and school do not open for rehearsal until 7 am. For the safety of the children, please do not leave them unattended either outside or inside (if you find a way in the building prior to 7 am) the grounds. Please wait for the Choirmaster to arrive so they may be properly and safely supervised.

.....Service Drill. Unless otherwise announced please plan to arrive on Sundays at 9:45 a.m. to vest and prepare music. Sunday rehearsal begins at 10 am for all Choristers. All announced rehearsal times are based on the expectation that the Chorister will be in his/her place at that time ready to rehearse.

Please arrive early enough to take care of personal matters so the practice can begin on time. This means in your place, vested in cassock with appropriate music, folder and hymnal at the appointed time.

Following rehearsal please go to the Music Room to finish vesting and remain quietly there until time to line up. Once the signal to line up has been given, please do not talk, but remain quiet and focused for the music you are about to offer in the service.

.....Procession. Some general rules to follow.

.....Stay an arm's length away from those ahead of you. Stay next to the person beside you, inside shoulders almost touching. The line should be centered in the aisle.

.....Listen and Sing. (On stairs it is sometimes better to Listen and Watch; we don't want to lose you.) Look at the head of the person in front of you; do not lean out and look around him or her.

.....Take free, comfortable steps rather than marching with the music. Watch so that you walk straight and know where the stairs are.

.....When you enter the choir, at the top of the choir steps, acknowledge the cross with a gentle bow of the head, continue moving and turn to enter your stall from the nave end or front. At the conclusion of the service, as the crucifer comes to the center, the entire choir should already be facing the Holy Table. As the crucifer turns to face the congregation, the entire choir should acknowledge the cross with a gentle bow of the head, the leading choristers follow then right behind the crucifer and tapers. We exit the choir stalls from the Sanctuary side or back.

.....While in the choir stalls, stay as close as possible to the person ahead of you until you are out of the stalls. Then, walk at a slow and gentle pace.

.....In turning corners, the outside person speeds up slightly. The inside person turns almost in place, almost stopping momentarily. Making sharp rather than sloppy corners depends on the inside person knowing exactly where to turn and doing it neatly.

.....You will not necessarily have the same partner going out as coming in.

.....Turn corners square; please do not cut corners.

.....Unless singing, hold music diagonally at your waist, top towards the right in the left hand (or inside hand depending on which side of the aisle you are on.)

.....Choristers leading at the front of the line must walk slowly or the back of the procession will have to run to keep up.

.....When not singing, there should be silence in the line, broken neither by feet slapping or sliding on the floor, nor by talking whispering, laughing, punching, etc.

.....Communion. In the Episcopal Church, all baptized persons are welcome to receive communion, either in both kinds or just the bread alone. Others may receive a blessing if they wish – it is customary to stand or kneel with hands folded across the chest as a sign that the blessing is desired. In order to keep traffic in the choir flowing smoothly, everyone will go to the altar rail for communion.

Each Chorister must decide with his or her own parents if they will receive communion or a blessing. The choirs will stand to support congregational singing and their musical offerings during communion. Do your best to see the conductor, but if it is impossible, stay calm and watch those facing you for cues. If you focus and stay relaxed, all the information you need will be given you.

.....Recession. As the service ends Choristers should stay in their lines and process without talking to the Music Room for dismissal. Following the dismissal, and only after the Daily Prayer for Choristers is said, music and vestments are carefully put away and the choir stalls are checked and cleaned. Should families need to make a quick get away, please speak with the Choirmaster before taking your Chorister. Choir parents have been so kind to donate lunch for Choristers; please see further in the handbook for the procedure to sign up to take a turn.

.....Final Thoughts.

.....The L's and C's of being in choir! Do you remember what they are?

.....Have I remembered to prepare my dress and appearance for a service or concert?

.....Do I enter our rehearsal and singing space with the respect that they deserve, showing to everyone I take my work in choir seriously and with joy? Do I put my materials away and depart with the same respect?

.....Have I paced my time well so that my homework and test preparation are done in good time for a very important restful and full night's sleep?

.....Have I taken good care of my music and vestments?

.....Have I thought ahead about my commitment to rehearsals and services so that my very important (and they are!) other activities such as sports, community organizations and social events have as strong a commitment as I give choir, but also, that I don't miss important rehearsals and services so I can participate fully in our offerings?

.....There will not be extra rehearsals or cramming for special projects or services.

.....Our daily work prepares us better than anything else.

.....Each time we meet to offer our music and work together is as important as the next, none rank higher than others. Each gathering builds on past experiences.
.....The strength of the choir rests on the commitment to one another and the musical offerings we each make. Our community has grown so much and I am so proud of you all.

Social Conduct

.....Expectations. Our behavior is based on mutual respect and love for all living creatures and for our environment. All Choristers are expected to treat one another and those teaching, leading and supporting them with the utmost courtesy.

.....Standards of Behavior. All Choristers are expected to follow these basic standards of behavior at all times.

.....Respect. Mutual respect, tolerance and love are the basic underpinnings of our choirs and the society of Grace Church. Choristers will speak to each other, their teachers, members of the church community and parents with respect. Any form of harassment, rudeness or insulting actions or words cannot be tolerated. When we gather at Grace Church, we are in a house of worship, and we must all act with appropriate reverence and respect for each other, our surroundings and our faith.

.....Attentiveness. Quiet attention during practices and offerings is our mutual goal. Our time together is precious. Choristers' paying full attention to the Choirmaster during practices and offerings and avoiding distracting each other, will make our time together lead to success and fulfillment.

.....Teamwork. A good choir is a good team. We all do better when we are supported by our peers, and the encouragement of others creates a happy and productive atmosphere and a better choir. Choristers should be supportive of each other.

.....Commitment. A Chorister must be committed to perform his or her personal best at each rehearsal and offering. Being passionate and dedicated to the work of the choir contributes to the overall progress of the choir and performance of the music. We want Choristers to celebrate their love for music and for each other.

.....Accountability. All Choristers are accountable for their conduct. Choristers must plan sufficiently in advance to make practices on time and to be prepared to offer their personal best. Choristers must also be responsible for following the dress code, organizing their music and following the processional and other rules of behavior in church.

.....Misconduct. Choristers who treat their work, materials, other children or adults inappropriately may be asked to sit out an activity, sent home immediately or face a period of suspension from the choir. They may also be fined a discretionary amount up to \$100.00 from their Scholarships. If the behavior continues, a conference with parents, the Choirmaster and the Rector will be scheduled to discuss how the situation may be resolved in a positive and healthy manner.

.....Wrongful Treatment. If a Chorister feels that he/she is being treated wrongly by either a contemporary or adult, the Chorister should immediately tell the Choirmaster or a parent as soon as possible. The Chorister should know the discussion will be kept confidential and that we will work quickly to investigate and correct inappropriate behavior. Being wronged does not give anyone the right to pass on that behavior.

.....Feedback. There are many boundaries and penalties contained in these words. We are not a community for the most part that enjoys such definitions. There is, however, a positive side and that is the spirit in which these policies have been set down. Boundaries and expectations provide security and a foundation for us to be fair, supportive and consistent in the nurture and development of the choir. We should find that these policies provide a positive foundation to enable communication, problem solving and support for our whole community. Please communicate your feedback to the Choirmaster on how best to make these boundaries and expectations workable for your family and the choir.

Contract

.....Agreement. The Chorister and the Chorister's parent(s) are expected to confirm, as a condition of participation in The Choir of Men and Boys or The Girls' Choir of Grace Church in New York and in order to support and encourage the work of the choir, that they have read the entire Choir Handbook, including the Code of Conduct and the proposed schedule for the coming season, and that they commit themselves to supporting the work and offerings of the choir.

.....Confirmation. Each Chorister will be asked to confirm the following: I have read the Chorister's Handbook for the current season – together with my family – and am prepared to follow the policies it outlines to the best of my abilities.

IV. Choir Parents' Commitment

Important Role of Choir Parents

Choir parents are critical to the success of The Boys' and Girls' Choirs. Parents' commitment to the choirs in the form of choir parent helping, coordination of special events, choir steering committee, teambuilding activities, trips and fellowship opportunities underpin the choir community.

Our community is blessed with amazing and unique gifts! We need all of you to be involved in the life of the choirs putting your extra ordinary talents to work. And, in fact, we want every family to commit to provide assistance to the choir – 100% parent commitment. Believe it or not, your contribution is one of the things that makes the experience truly meaningful for your Chorister! The Choir Steering Committee continues to organize us in new and creative ways to enable all to participate in appropriate ways and working to spread the opportunities for service around so that each task can be a joy rather than a burden.

Thank you for all the enthusiasm and support you offer your children in their participation in the The Boys' and Girls' Choirs. In recent years we have moved under the guidance of the Choir Steering Committee from minimal parent involvement to 100% parent involvement. This is an amazing accomplishment and has greatly enhanced our music making and community life. Music blooms from good resonance. Tension and pressure deaden resonance and kill the music. I hope this new year will be full of music blooming from the fun and energy we all experience in supporting the growth of the Choristers.

Choir Parents' Contribution

The following are areas in which you can help. There is something for everyone and for every time and season. Please email the Music Office at helfensteinch@yahoo.com with your ideas and times available to participate. No experience is necessary, all training provided!

.....Year Round - Choir Parent Helper

.....Service Choir Parent Helper. Each time one of the choirs sings we need at least one parent on duty. Parents will help with vesting, supervision and if necessary health issues – i.e., if someone should become ill.

.....Door Duty. Occasionally there may also be a need for a choir parent to help us with Door Duty for morning or special rehearsals. This entails watching the 802 Door of the Parish House so Choristers and families may enter while maintaining a safe environment in the Church and Parish House.

.....Sunday Choir Lunch. Please sign up to provide lunch for the Boys' or Girls' Choirs between the morning service and their afternoon rehearsal. This is a wonderful time of fellowship and fun for the Choristers. Perhaps team up with another family to take on this task once during the year.

.....September - Vestment Fitting and Care. Be a part of the team that oversees the maintenance, care and fitting of the Choristers vestments. With some sixty Choristers there are many vestments. At Choir Camp, we really go into gear and get everyone outfitted – we really need your help! Occasionally during the year some minor maintenance is also required. Then as the year progresses, new vestments need to be ordered from time to time as the Choristers grow. A Chair and two associates organize and administer this project.

.....November - Thanksgiving Pie Sale. This was begun in order to help finance the Bristol Trip in the summer of 2004. Everyone was pleased with the quality of the pies and our profits were high. This, like all of our fundraising that year, was designed in order to provide opportunities to spread the word about our choirs and raise funds from new sources. With the school's capital fund project and the church's ongoing restoration plans it is important for new sources of support to be identified. The wonderful benefit in this is the great gift of allowing people who might not know about our music making to get involved and support us. At the time of delivery care must be given to make sure those pies (most of them) which are delivered directly to offices and apartment buildings

arrive correctly and on time. The Baker provides this service, but follow up has been needed in the past. A Chair and four associates organize and administer the sale.

.....November - Grace Church School/Choir Alumni Weekend. A warm welcome to the school community by the church. Two volunteers organize our Choir Table at the Coffee Hour following the Sunday Service. We also welcome home the alumni of the choir at Evensong on Saturday. Eventually we would like to organize a reception or dinner as a time of fellowship for all.

.....December - Annual Christmas Party. AMAZING is the only word that comes to mind. This annual activity is a high point of the fall term with much fun and good cheer had by all. A Chair and an appropriate number of supporters plan and organize this event at a location to be determined.

.....February – The Annual Concert of Music for Treble Voices by our Novice and Junior Choristers with a guest conductor and The Whiting of Novices. This event was founded with Dr. Barry Rose, a great friend of the choirs. At this concert which features all our Novice and Junior Choristers the first year choristers are promoted and earn their “white” or surplice. We follow this hour program with a lovely brief reception to celebrate the day. Novices and Juniors Sing and Seniors Listen.

.....March/April - Annual Easter Breakfast. A highlight of the spring. This annual event takes place between the two morning Easter Day Services. Head chefs, planners, cooks, shoppers, decorators, servers and cleaners make this event festive for everyone.

.....Final Friday of April - Annual Concert and Reception. This Concert features our Senior Choristers with the professional adult singers. The Choir of Men and Boys and The Girls’ Choir. Senior Sing – Juniors and Novices Listen.

The past few years have witnessed absolutely beautiful evenings for everyone who attended. The proceeds from the tickets have gone to the Choir Special Projects Fund to enable trips and recordings. Two Chairs and a happy committee of planners make this into a reality.

.....June - End of the Year Raffle. This event is an amazing raffle and in some years has grossed the highest profits for our Special Projects Fund. Like our pie sale we concentrate our sales away from the school and church communities and spread the word about our wonderful choirs. Once prizes have been solicited, tickets are prepared and sold, and the drawing takes place at the festive Church Family Picnic on Choir Recognition Sunday. Two Chairs and an aggressive committee of prize gathering people organize and administer.

.....Fall and Spring - Social Events. Each choir will have an organized special social event each term. Parents are needed to organize these special community/team building fun social events for the Choristers. Unlike our other activities, these are Chorister

specific for team building and fellowship only for our Choristers. A Chair and two associates organize and administer.

.....Fall and Spring – Newsletter. Work with the Choirmaster to create a fall and spring newsletter for the choir community to communicate and celebrate our activities! We have already identified a website that makes this process fun and easy and something that can be done with others.

.....All Year - Choir Trip. We are all eagerly anticipating the opportunity to make more memorable choir trips. But lots of work needs to come together before we get on any flights! This is a labor of love for your child and the whole community. A Chair and three energetic associates can begin to plan, fund raise and organize, working closely with the Choirmaster.

.....All Year – Alumni Relations. Continue what has begun in recent years in keeping Choir Alumni contacts up to date and continue to develop communication and contact with Alumni. Many of our alumni Choristers would enjoy the opportunity to get together on an annual basis. They have wonderful stories to share with us and we would all benefit from a relationship with our colleagues and their families.

.....All Year – Publicity. Work with the Choirmaster and the Church in order to increase the visibility of our choirs in the musical life of our city and spread the word about opportunities to hear the choirs.

.....All Year – Choir Steering Committee. Work with the Choirmaster and the Rector in order to support, oversee and expand the offerings of the choirs.

Thank You!

.....for your Help. Many of you have already kindly volunteered to help with various tasks, which reflects the constant outpouring of generosity of this community. For those of you still considering what to do, please volunteer right away!

.....Communication. This is the key. Thank you for all your kindness, vision and support. The more we engage together in the process of the growth, training and visioning of the life of the choirs, the greater will be the opportunities we may offer the Choristers.

.....Suggestions. Please get out your red pens and make suggestions for this and all texts. What can be made clearer? What still needs to be added? What needs to go away? Thank you for your eagle eyes!

V. Schedules

Schedule Description for The Boys' and Girls' Choirs

.....Sunday Services – Required for Senior Choristers, Optional for Junior Choristers and Novices.

Except: Special Required dates for Junior Choristers and Novices on Selected Sundays that are Identified in the Schedule.

In general, Sunday SENIORS Arrive at 9:45, Call at 10 am for Senior Choristers, Sunday JUNIORS and NOVICES Arrive at 10:15, Call at 10:30 am for Junior Choristers and Novices,

Sunday Service at 11 am.

All Junior Choristers – both Boys and Girls – must attend all Required Sundays noted in the schedule for Junior Choristers. On those dates plan to arrive at 9:45, Call at 10 am.

.....Annual Special Offerings – Required for All Choristers except as otherwise noted.

September (Sunday) – First Sunday of the New Choir Season

October (Sunday afternoon) – Britten’s Rejoice in the Lamb (Boys Only)

November – Grace Church School Sunday Morning Service

November (Wednesday) – GCS Thanksgiving Service (Seniors Only)

December (Wednesday) – Annual Community Carol Sing

December (Sunday afternoon) – Britten’s Ceremony of Carols (Girls Only)

December – Christmas Pageant on Christmas Eve (Juniors and Novices Only)

December – A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve (Seniors Only)

February (Sunday afternoon) – Novice/Junior Choristers Concert (Novice/Juniors

.....perform, Seniors listen)

April (Saturday/Sunday) – Easter Rehearsal and Morning Services (Seniors Only)

April (Friday) – Annual Concert and Reception (Seniors perform, Juniors listen)

June (Sunday) – Choir Appreciation Sunday

June (Wednesday) – Grace Church School Graduation (Seniors Only)

.....Rehearsals – Novices

Thursday Afternoons – 3:30 to 4:30 pm. Required for Boy and Girl Novices. Gather and dismiss in the Music Room. No Weekday Morning or Sunday Afternoon Rehearsals for Novices.

.....Evensong Offerings and Rehearsals – Junior Choristers

.....Boy Junior Choristers

Tuesday Choral Evensongs and Rehearsals – 5:00 to 6:30 pm. Required.

Evensong/Rehearsal. Call will be at 5 pm, Service will be from 6:00 to 6:30 pm. Gather and dismiss in the Music Room.

Thursday Mornings – 7:00 to 7:20 am. Optional. The Practice/Breakfast Club. Gather in the Music Room.

Thursday Morning Rehearsals – 7:20 to 8:10 am. Required. Gather and dismiss in the Music Room.

.....Girl Junior Choristers

Tuesday Choral Evensongs and Rehearsals – 5:00 to 6:30 pm. Required. Evensong/Rehearsal. Call will be at 5 pm, Service will be from 6:00 to 6:30 pm. Gather and dismiss in the Music Room.

Friday Mornings – 7:00 to 7:25 am. Optional. The Practice/Breakfast Club. Gather in the Music Room.

Friday Morning Rehearsals – 7:25 to 8:10 am. Required. Gather and dismiss in the Music Room.

.....Rehearsals – Senior Choristers

.....Boy Senior Choristers

Tuesday and Thursday Mornings – 7:00 to 7:20 am. Optional. The Practice/Breakfast Club. Gather in the Music Room.

Tuesday and Thursday Mornings – 7:20 to 8:10 am. Required. Gather and dismiss in the Music Room.

Sunday Afternoons – 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Required. Gather and dismiss in the Music Room.

.....Girl Senior Choristers

Wednesday and Friday Mornings – 7:00 to 7:25 am. Optional. The Practice/Breakfast Club. Gather in the Music Room.

Wednesday and Friday Mornings – 7:25 to 8:10 am. Required. Gather and dismiss in the Music Room.

Sunday Afternoons – 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Required. Gather and dismiss in the Music Room.

.....Voice Study Program – All Choristers

.....Voice Class and Lessons – as Scheduled with. Required for Senior Choristers, Optional for Novice and Junior Choristers. Contact the Choirmaster for details and to schedule. See Choir Family Home Page or page seven of this Handbook for details.

The Four L's of Choir
From Dr. Barry Rose

Look
Listen
Learn
Lead

A community for everyone celebrating excellence in music and God's love for all!

The Seven C's of Choir
From Dr. Barry Rose

Courtesy
Confidence
Communication
Care
Commitment
Clarity
Concentration

RE-HEAR-SING = Rehearsing!

Word for 2010-2011 – REMEMBER
Word for 2011-2012 - PRECISION