

WELCOME

What a difference music makes in our lives! Music is a vehicle for praising our Father and Savior, and this simple fact makes participating on the Praise Team a high and noble calling. We can find satisfaction in producing great music together, but our ultimate purpose is to develop and best use the vocal, instrumental, and technical abilities God has given us to assist the congregation to wholeheartedly praise God through music.

Music has always figured prominently in the worship of God's people. When Israel stood on the opposite shore of the Red Sea and celebrated God's miraculous deliverance, they sang (Ex. 15). The lyrics to their song declare their reason for singing, *The Lord is my strength and song* (Ex. 15:2). Life with the Lord gives His children reason to sing.

When Israel was about to enter the promised land, God commissioned Moses to write a song, to make sure that all Israel memorized the lyrics, and to instruct every Israelite to teach his progeny how to sing it. Moses complied, *So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the sons of Israel* (Ex. 31:22). God's intent was for this song to serve as a memorable doctrinal benchmark for His people to use for moral guidance.

Most of the Psalms are song lyrics, many of them written by King David, an accomplished harpist and singer. David appointed a group of singers and musicians (288 who served on a rotating basis) for service in the tabernacle (1 Chron. 25:1-7), the beginnings of a standing musicians guild in Israel. James encourages any who are joyful, *Let him sing praises* (James 5:13). The heavenly drama recorded in Revelation clearly reveals a place where singing occupies a prominent place (Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3).

Paul is clear that when people allow the Word of God to hold sway over their lives and are living the kind of enriched life that only its truths can sustain, they sing: *Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God* (Col. 3:16). This music will serve as a training tool ("teaching") as well as provoke conviction ("admonishing") among others in the local fellowship. The type of music will fall into three basic categories: "Psalms" are declarations of doctrine; "hymns" are musical prayers and praises which extol the virtues of God, Jesus, and the Spirit; "spiritual songs" are ballads that narrate a personal spiritual experience. Think of psalms as music sung in the third person, hymns as second person, and spiritual songs as first person. Regardless of the category of music, it is to be sung from a heart that is overflowing with gratitude for all that God has done.

Something so significant is worthy of our best efforts. Worship music rises to the level of excellence when creativity, spontaneity, and freedom to express love for God are complemented by planning, preparation, and hard work. King David understood well the need for a heart of praise to be matched by dedication to develop one's skill:

*Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre;
Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings.
Sing to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a shout of joy* (Ps. 33:2-3).

There is a wonderful satisfaction that comes from doing something of eternal value. When a worship service is carefully designed to reflect the truth about God, believers can be edified. In such a service, even an unbeliever can be positively influenced: *[When] an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you* (1 Cor.

14:24). There is nothing quite like helping others to grow in their appreciation of God, and that encourages us each week to press on to improve our skill in leading the body of Christ into authentic praise.

An incredible side benefit which we experience is the community life of the Praise Team. Our closest bonds in Christ are developed among those with whom we co-labor for His cause. We experience true Christian fellowship in a way which strengthens and sharpens us for having spent time together. We love being together because we are a family!

Whether you are an instrumentalist, vocalist, or supply technical expertise, you will find great satisfaction working with others for the cause of Christ and the welfare of His body. This handbook is designed to communicate the foundational principles, procedures, and requirements for effective ministry of the CBC Praise Team.

OUR PURPOSE

Our goal is: **To serve the Lord by leading (through example and invitation) the congregation in genuine and wholehearted praise of God through music.**

By Example: If we are going to help the congregation to worship God, we must first seek to enter into wholehearted worship of God ourselves. Worship is not just an event, it is not something defined by a place or a time. It is a pattern of living in which one celebrates and acknowledges God's claim upon his life. The first requisite of any who would serve on the CBC Praise Team is that the individual be a genuine worshiper who is a living portrayal of the first

priority of worship described in Romans 12:1: *I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

By Invitation: For Praise Team members, their ministry qualifications must go beyond having an authentic personal worship life. The reason for being on the platform is to lead the congregation with skill and to draw them into praise. As we worship, our voices, our instruments, our manner, and our countenances must all serve as a faith-inspiring, warm, and compelling invitation for others to join in praising God.

Leading by example and invitation is motivated by a desire to see God glorified and His people grow in their ability to reflect His glory. Paul's confidence in Timothy is reflected in this statement: *For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare* (Phil. 2:19). Paul knew that Timothy could lead the Philippians because he was willing to yield personal interests and preferences in order to promote the welfare of others.

Leadership is also an ability to draw from people something that goes beyond what they could do by themselves. Biblical leadership does this without resort to the methods of "lordship leadership" employed by the leaders of Gentiles. It is a high calling and noble art that respects every believer as a priest, yet makes a winsome and almost irresistible appeal for saints to enjoy a sum greater than the parts as they praise God together. An effective team knows how to exhort, and encourage, and implore as a father would his children (1 Thess. 2:11).

OUR STRATEGY

We believe that a solid biblical foundation, love and understanding of the body, responsiveness to our leadership, and working toward musical excellence will keep the praise ministry at CBC headed in the right direction. Although our biblical purpose will not change, our methods may be refined or adjusted over time to improve our effectiveness in reaching the goal.

Purposeful We do not focus on any one musical style, preference, or current fad. Rather, we employ “psalms,” “hymns,” and “spiritual songs,” which meet a standard and then apply the skills and talents of team members to make those songs come alive with relevance and musicality. The Praise Team uses five criteria by which to select a worship song: We only use songs that are 1) doctrinally sound, 2) lyrically interesting (stands on its own merit with no explanation and is lyrically thoughtful), 3) singable for the congregation (not highly stylized or complex), 4) apt for the context (fits the sermon message or a specific need of the body), and 5) musically interesting. The CBC Praise Team seeks to produce music which by its style and message edifies the saints and leads them into God’s presence.

Authentic People are hungry for what is real, and want to be led into God’s presence by those who are trustworthy stewards of God’s manifold grace (I Pet. 4:10-11). Leaders and team members carry a great responsibility and accountability for personal holiness that is transparently authentic. This commitment helps us present ourselves in a way that adorns the doctrine of God and invites the congregation to participate in worship that is genuine.

Accountability Each member of the Praise Team is in process and will have spiritual ups and downs. But there should be

an upward and observable trend in growth and obedience from month to month. Ministering each week in a powerful and profound way depends upon team members being clean vessels. We are so committed to a standard of personal holiness that leaders may ask someone to “sit it out” if there is an attitude problem or some behavior that diminishes the team’s ability to come into God’s presence with clean hands.

Community A commitment to one another expressed in love, unity, and teachability will help the team maintain an environment of spiritual health. We are dedicated to preserving and strengthening a community where team members are encouraged to be the real thing, whose lives exemplify healthy spirituality and God-centered priorities. The times we spend in prayer for each other tell you about our commitment to one another. We know that unless we stand together we will fall apart.

Sustainability It is important to build, strengthen, and expand the team as God provides qualified individuals. We are always looking for others who can be encouraged and drawn into this ministry. With a growing pool of musicians and singers, rotation of personnel would not only be possible, but would strengthen the ministry by keeping team members fresh, recharged, and available for cross-training during “off” times. For example, a singer who is “off” on a particular month could learn how to run slides and serve in the sound booth.

OUR STRUCTURE

The CBC Worship Pastor is Jim Fleming. Jim is responsible to coordinate all aspects of the worship services at CBC. This is accomplished in large part through the worship council, which meets on a weekly basis for worship service planning and evaluation. This

meeting is attended by the worship staff on an “as required” basis and consists of the following:

- 1 Worship Leader(s)
- 2 Music Director
- 3 Chief Audio Tech
- 4 Chief Video Tech
- 5 Music Secretary
- 6 Facilities Coordinator
- 7 Children’s Choir Director
- 8 Adult Ministry Pastor

Each of these worship staff members is responsible to recruit, train, and lead their respective teams, all of whom are together called “Praise Team Members.” They will work toward recruiting enough Praise Team members to allow everyone to serve on a rotation where applicable. Ideally, everyone would be able to serve for one month, and enjoy participating in the congregation on the off month(s). We are not there, yet, but we are working to get there. This strategy helps prevent burnout, is protective of family priorities, and is healthy for the congregation in that they learn how to respond to different leaders.

The Worship Leaders are responsible to facilitate congregational singing when the body is gathered corporately. They assemble collections of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs for worship services, help rehearse the band and singers to lead the congregational singing, and coordinate their efforts with those of the audio and video techs. Their final song selections for each service are reviewed by the Worship Pastor to check for overall time factors, flow, continuity, and complementarity of each component. After the song packages have been completed for the upcoming month, the team leaders email the schedule to those singing or playing for the month. The Worship Leaders may secure the assistance of others to lead or play as needed.

The Music Director works with the Worship Leaders to plan songs for each month’s worship services, and to assist them, their teams, and those who provide instrumental or vocal solos in matters of musical execution. The Music Director is responsible to promote the musicality of all that the Praise Team provides by giving attention to instrumentation, voicing, tempo, parts, segues, arrangements – any musical elements that affect how the music is planned and presented for a worship service. Additionally, all seasonal special music, or group pieces are prepared and rehearsed by the Director. The Music Director also organizes a quarterly personnel schedule which is posted in the music office by the Music Secretary.

The Audio and Video Techs are responsible for all technical aspects of the service, including the sound system, lighting system, video elements, recordings, and video projection. The great tech challenge is to become invisible! So, this is definitely the place for selfless, secure servants. Training is essential to do this job well. Some musical background is advantageous, but a “good ear” is essential to mix sound and blend voices.

The Praise Band is responsible for all live instrumental elements of the worship services, including instrumental solos and ensembles, accompaniment of congregational singing, and accompaniment of vocal specials. Proficiency on an instrument is essential, as is the ability to read music and/or charts, but a servant’s attitude is equally so. Sometimes the greatness of an instrumentalist is defined not by what he plays, but by what he doesn’t! Training is required for all instrumentalists on the sound system, monitor system, and keyboards or other electronic equipment.

The Praise Singers are responsible for vocal leadership and backup for congregational singing each Sunday. Each vocalist must be able to carry a part on his/her own, be willing to learn how to

sing in a way that draws others into praise, and be willing to devote time on his/her own (in addition to rehearsal) to master the music for that coming Sunday. A Praise Singer must be able to read music or “head sing” to learn a song (most often a CD will be available by which to hear music and learn parts). Rehearsal for singers is required for participation on Sunday morning unless special arrangements have been made with the Worship Leader and/or Music Director ahead of time. Special group pieces and solos may involve Praise Singers, but also may involve additional personnel who are only available seasonally. The Music Director will rehearse all special group music and teach parts, as well as facilitate solos for those who need assistance. All solos and special music will be approved by the Praise Team leaders before performances are scheduled.

The Music Secretary is responsible to keep CCLI records and submit reports, maintain the music, and copy song sheets for other musicians as needed. The Music Secretary also maintains the music calendar posted in the music office. This calendar includes weekly song packages, the schedule for musicians/singers, bulletins for special events, and “Music Review Night” invitations. Team members are responsible to check the bulletin board in the music office to keep abreast of scheduling, song information, and announcements.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Regardless of the area where Praise Team members serve, the significance of what is done calls participants to more than just turning knobs, playing an instrument, or singing. Who we are and how we conduct ourselves is of greater importance. For this reason, we ask that everyone who serves on the Praise Team cultivate and maintain these qualities.

1. **Active Member:** An active member is one engaged in the life and ministry of the congregation, who champions a value system that reflects the values of the church. It is a requirement that all Praise Team members are members of CBC. In the case of those new to the church, they may serve on the Praise Team as long as they join at the earliest opportunity.
2. **Leader/Example:** Each team member should be pursuing a life that is pleasing to the Lord as taught in the Scriptures and providing an example of maturity worthy of commendation to the congregation. He/she must be able to subordinate personal taste and preference to what will best promote the spiritual health and welfare of the congregation.
3. **Servant Spirit/Teamwork:** A team member is willing to cooperate with the group and work in a submissive and supportive manner with his/her leaders. The team player is capable of being directed, and of receiving direction with a good attitude. He/she earnestly applies himself to make a plan work, even one which does not reflect his personal preferences, and protects the unity of the team and the ability of others to respond positively to the service.
4. **Diligence and Faithfulness:** Each member should be willing to work on vocal parts and instrumental/technical skill improvement on his own. He/she should be faithful to attend practice times or work sessions, and protective of the efficiency of those times. Exceptions are the prerogative of the Worship Leader and will be based upon his confidence in someone’s prior preparation.
5. **Answer to Calling:** Each team member should clearly be led to minister as a response to God’s direction and call. He

should have a personal sense of stewardship, and the confirmation of those who lead him, that his gifts and abilities are nobly and profitably used in helping the congregation to praise God through music.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

We want participation on the Praise Team to be fun and spiritually fulfilling. We work at striking a balance between rules that promote productivity and effectiveness while still leaving room for creativity and spontaneity. It's a balance musicians need. Here are some basic guidelines and operating principles that we have found to be helpful.

Exploration before commitment. We invite anyone who has an interest in joining the team to contact the relevant team leader and plan to come to practices/work sessions for a one month "taste" of serving on the Praise Team. We often hear from those who are new that they had no idea how much time and effort were involved in putting together the services. So we offer a "no fault" exploration period. Come play, sing, "tech" for a month and see if the experience whets your appetite for more. This period will also give leaders a chance to evaluate where your abilities are best used.

One year commitment. If, after your exploration period, you discover your gifts and talents would complement the music ministry, and you want to join the team, your leader will propose an assignment. He will ask you to make a one-year commitment to the position. You will be committing yourself to the principles in this booklet, to faithfully attend assigned practices (during the week and before services), and to serve on the Sundays for which you are scheduled. After each year of service, if you desire to continue to

serve, you will be asked by your team leader to renew your commitment, generally in the summer before the new school year begins.

Your leader is your problem solver. Every team (band, singers, audio, video, facility) has a team leader. Your leader is the one whose direction you will seek. If you have a problem with anything, go directly and only to your leader. If you have difficulty with equipment, schedules, practices, or personal issues, let your team leader know so that problems may be solved constructively.

Heart trumps all. The telegraph principle says that your heart is reflected in your countenance, and your countenance will communicate to the congregation. If your heart is not right, that will be telegraphed to the congregation and will undercut their ability to respond positively to the corporate worship. If your heart is not right, get it right before you play/sing/serve, or let your leader know that you need to sit out.

Encouragement is our language. It takes courage to stand before the congregation and bring an offering of praise to the Lord. Most musicians are secure enough to be braced for this challenge, but among team members we want to balance that challenge by cultivating a positive and affirming ministry environment. Don't be quick to say what you don't like about what someone else is doing – trust your leaders to work out those bugs. While they do, find ways to encourage your teammates. Build the kind of environment where the team feels safe to take risks, to try something new, to stretch. The minute we are satisfied with the status quo we have consigned ourselves to forever staying in one place. But if we are going to keep raising the bar, we need the kind of courage that is fostered by team members who are our biggest fans and cheerleaders.

Although we want the Praise Team to be an environment defined by encouragement, practice sessions often require straight talk. Assume the best of others, and take constructive suggestions with a mature, teachable attitude. The team may have to try several options before landing on a style or arrangement that gels. Trust your leader for the final call on a song, and find ways to affirm, support, and encourage the contribution of others.

Jam for fun / practice for product. We will periodically schedule jam sessions where we can just have fun playing with music as a band. This is the place for experimentation without constraints. But weekly practices serve a different purpose. They are a platform from which to coordinate the contributions of each team member so that we best achieve our purpose. Practices can be fun, but this is not the place to experiment. If you have an idea for something new or different that could be done, review it with the Music Director or Worship Leader prior to practice. Come to practices already prepared to play what is planned for the coming Sunday. Practices are held one night per week (usually Tuesday) from 7 to 9 p.m. The practices will include opening prayer, monthly training sessions in worship truths and music principles, order of songs for the service, and preparatory practice on new music. Occasionally, practices may be switched due to schedule conflicts. Praise Team members need to be ready for a sound check and practice Sunday morning at 8:15 a.m. before the service begins at 10 a.m.

Music from all. The songs that are used as specials and for congregational singing can be suggested by anyone, including congregation members. The suitability of a song will be evaluated by the Worship Council as well as by the Praise Team members on periodic “music review” get-togethers. If you have a song that you would like to introduce to the congregation, secure the following materials, a demo CD and sheet music or a demo CD and chart with lyrics, and pass it on to the Worship Pastor. Come to a worship

council (they are held every Sunday at 4:45 PM in Jim’s office) or “music review” night to give your input.

On the lookout. Be looking for individuals who have musical abilities and a heart for God. The best way to draw new people in is by “discovering” them, not waiting for them to come to us. If you meet someone who has potential, pass that name along to the Worship Pastor. It is possible that someone new may be used for a special or in a temporary role to explore what they can contribute.

You need a family. Praise Team members develop close relationships, simply for the fact that they spend time serving the Lord together. But the Praise Team does not currently include a “community” venue for team members. Without community, you will hobble your ability to keep your walk with the Lord where it needs to be to serve Him well in this ministry. Therefore, everyone is expected to participate in a CBC community group or some other accountability group where biblical community is practiced and enjoyed.

DRESS CODE GUIDELINES

Although no ministry is more important than any other ministry in God’s eyes, servants in the music ministry tend to be scrutinized longer and harder by others because they are so visible. Consequently, we need to rise to a higher standard, especially in one area of human expression, how we dress.

The Bible specifically commends modesty as the guiding principle for women’s attire in the assembly of believers (I Tim. 2:9-10; I Pet. 5:3-4). Further, the Bible states: *Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification* (Rom. 15:2). Our manner of dress

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does not serve others when it calls attention to ourselves and distracts or detracts from the ability of others to wholeheartedly praise God. The key words here are **sensitivity** and **modesty**.

Here are the guidelines we have found helpful and request all praise team members to support.

What You **Cannot** Wear

Women	Men
1. No hems on skirts or dresses that are above the knee.	1. No tank tops or sloppy T-shirts. Please do not wear any shirts that have writing or large logos on them.
2. Nothing low-cut, scant, or see-through.	2. No shorts. No frayed, tattered, or holey blue jeans. No sweat pants.
3. No frayed, tattered, or holey blue jeans. No sweat pants. No shorts.	3. No tight, form-fitting pants.
4. No tight, form-fitting pants or dresses.	4. No hats or caps.
5. No hats.	5. No cologne or strong aftershave.
6. No perfume.	6. No keys/change in pockets.

Do wear modest, understated clothing and jewelry. Festive colors are great, but remember that the greatest asset to your wardrobe is a countenance radiating a love for God that makes whatever you're wearing pale by comparison.