

Alpharetta First
United Methodist Church

CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

Parent Handbook



HELPING CHILDREN DISCOVER THE
JOY OF PRAISE & WORSHIP
THROUGH MUSIC

Revised July 2018



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WELCOME TO CHILDREN'S CHOIR!

My name is Ann Hudson, and I am the Director of Children's Music. I want to welcome you and your children to our AFUMC Children's Choir Program. We offer a comprehensive, scripturally based choir program for children ages 2 years - 5th grade that includes 11 different choirs.

We believe that children who participate in choir will strengthen their faith and develop self-confidence as they learn new musical and social skills, sing in worship and participate in church wide programs like the Children's Nativity and Children's Music Sundays. Our older choirs prepare musicals and other programs for Wednesday Night Suppers and the Children's Sunday School.

This handbook will give you an overview of our Choir Program and answer many of the questions you might have. Please feel free to call me at 770-475-5576 or email at ahudson@afumc.org if you need more information.

I still remember the songs I learned as a child - their message of love and faith continues to strengthen me today. "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so." What better gift can we give our children? I look forward to seeing you and your children each week in choir!

Ann Hudson
Director of Children's Music



Choir Names and Colors

Creation Choir - White

2 Year Olds

Cherub Choirs - Light Blue

3 Year Olds

Sonshine Choirs - Yellow

4 Year Olds

Melody Choirs - Green

Kindergarten

Carol Choir - Orange

1st Grade

Rise 'n Shine - Red

2nd Grade

Celebration Choir - Blue

3rd Grade

All God's Children - Purple

4th and 5th Grade



“Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world.”

Who Can Join Choir?

Any child, age 2 years (by Sept. 1) - 5th grade can join a children's choir - you do not have to be a church member. Choir is a great way to help friends and neighbors become involved in our church.

How Do I Register My Child?

Registration for our AFUMC Children's Choirs is online. Registration begins during the summer and is open until mid-April. It is easy to register your child online. Go to the church website at afumc.org. Click on CHILDREN then CHILDREN'S MUSIC. There will be a link on the opening page. If you have any problem with your registration, please contact Cindy Poelking at cpoelking@afumc.org

Your child can join one of our Children's Choirs any time during the school year. Just register your child online by Tuesday and come on Wednesday afternoon to the Children's Choir Help Desk on the 2nd floor of the Trinity Hall building to get your child's choir assignment, name badges and a schedule.

Children's Choir Kick-Off Party

On a Wednesday in mid-August, from 5:30 - 6:30, we have our Children's Choir Kick-Off Party. We have food, face painting, crafts and balloons for the kids. You and your children can meet all our directors and purchase used or last year's choir shirts.



When Do the Choirs Practice?

All our Children's Choirs practice on Wednesday afternoons. The 2 year olds - Kindergarten choirs practice from 6:00 - 6:30. The 1st - 5th grade choirs practice from 5:45 - 6:30. All rehearsals are in the Trinity Hall Building. The Children's Choir year is August through April. The church supper is served from 5:15 - 6:45. You can eat before or after choir.

How Do I Drop Off and Pick Up My Child?

All children 2 years - 3rd grade must be dropped off and picked up in their choir room. Children who are in the 4th & 5th grades can be dismissed to meet their parents or can be picked up in the room. Parents of these older children need to let their directors know what their children should do.

When a child arrives at choir the adult dropping him/her off will receive a Pick- Up Badge. The child will receive a matching nametag. Usually, the same adult will drop off and pick up their child. Other adults may pick up a child, but only if they have the Pick- Up Badge. **You can only pick up your child if you have the Pick-Up Badge.** Please remember this is for the safety of your children!

The Children's Choir Help Desk

The **Children's Choir Help Desk** is located on the 2nd floor of the Trinity Hall building. Someone will be at the desk every Wednesday before and during choir rehearsals. If you to pick-up t-shirts, get a copy of a schedule or have any other questions, please stop by and someone will help you.



What Will My Child Do in Choir?

We offer a comprehensive, spiritually based graded choir program at AFUMC. **Singing** provides the foundation for all our Children's Choirs. A large part of every rehearsal will be spent learning new songs, reviewing favorite songs and in the younger choirs, playing singing games. Our goal is to help every child find their own special and unique voice. We believe the ability to "sing your praise" helps children express their faith and share in the joy of worship.

The younger Children's Choirs work on pitch matching, echo clapping, beat and rhythm. They also use lots of songs and activities involving movement. The older choirs learn how to follow the notes on a sheet of music or in a hymnal. By the time, they reach the 4th and 5th grades most children can identify common music markings and sing from a piece of choral music. The older choirs also learn how to sing in 2 parts.

All our choirs use **rhythm instruments**. The children learn to play hand drums, sticks, maracas, egg shakers, wood and tone blocks, guiro's, triangles and tambourines. We also have resonator bells and autoharps. Orff instruments are used during Drum Circle. These include high quality bass and alto xylophones, glockenspiels and hand drums.

Children in choir learn how to lead and participate in worship. They learn to share their faith with people in our church and community. Children gain self confidence as they participate in special programs like the Children's Nativity and choir musicals. All of our choirs will be learning scripture songs. Because music involves both sides of the brain, the scripture that a child learns to sing will never be forgotten.

Our AFUMC Children's Choirs are

**HELPING CHILDREN DISCOVER
THE JOY OF PRAISE & WORSHIP
THROUGH MUSIC**





Who are the Directors and Choir Parents?

All our Children's Choir directors, accompanists and choir parents are volunteers. Anji Hudson, the Director of Children's Music, is a full-time staff member of AFUMC. All our volunteers participate in training workshops and have completed all the requirements of our AFUMC Safe Sanctuary Program.

Safe Sanctuary Program

All volunteers who work with children or youth, and all AFUMC church staff are required to pass a criminal background check. They must also complete a Safe Sanctuary training class. All volunteers and staff are required to renew their training every year and background checks are rerun every three years. The safety and well-being of your child is our highest priority.



Choir T-Shirts

All our children's choirs have t-shirts. Each age level has a different color. The 2's wear white, the 3's wear light blue, the 4's wear yellow, the kindergarten choirs wear green, 1st graders wear orange, 2nd graders wear red, 3rd graders wear royal blue and the 4th and 5th graders wear purple.

We have a "T-Shirt Day" each October when everyone wears their choir shirts to rehearsal. All the choirs wear their shirts when they sing in church, and for the fall and spring Children's Music Sundays.

Do I have to buy a new Choir Shirt each year?

New Choir shirts can be purchased when you register your child online. Every year we have a different design for the choir shirts.

You can purchase a new shirt for your child each year if you wish. The cost is \$10. You can also purchase new shirts from previous years for \$5 and used shirts for \$2 at the Kickoff Party. If you order a new shirt, they will be passed out in October during choir.

It will make no difference which shirt you choose to purchase. Many families pass the shirts down through all their children, so we always have a mix of designs. The colors do not change.

Choir Crosses

Every child, age 3 years - 5th grades, has a choir cross with their name on the back. The crosses are worn when the children sing in worship. The wooden cross has ribbons added for each year they are in choir. The ribbons match the color of each choir. (See the list of choir names and colors.)

Choir crosses are ordered when a child registers for choir the first time. The cost is \$5. The crosses are stored at the church. When a child goes into the 6th grade, or if they move, they take their cross with them.



How We Keep in Touch

You will receive cards in the mail, handouts and email reminders about choir events and special services. You will receive an email reminder when your child's choir is scheduled to sing in worship. Please let us know if your home address or e-mail address changes.



Using the Church Web Site

You can always find the **Children's Choir Schedule** on the church web site. Go to afumc.org and click on **CHILDREN**. Then click on **CHILDREN'S MUSIC** and select **SCHEDULES**. You will also be able to find information about rehearsals, (when and where to meet, what to wear) detailed schedules for the fall and spring Music Sundays, the Children's Nativity and Christmas Eve.

Schedule Information

You will receive copies of the following schedules at the Kick-off Party and first rehearsal in August and January. Copies will also be at the Choir Help Desk.

Children's Choir Fall Schedule (Includes singing for worship Oct.-Dec.)

Fall Children's Music Sunday (Warm-up times and locations)

December Schedule (Includes Children's Nativity and Christmas Eve)

You will receive a **Singing for Worship January - April** schedule in January.



Singing for Traditional Worship

All of our Children's Choirs sing for worship. When your child is scheduled to sing, you will receive a reminder that will tell you what time and where they will meet. The kids wear their choir shirts when they sing. Extra shirts are available on Sunday mornings.

Most choirs meet at 10:40. Children who are in Sunday School will be picked up by the choir parents at 10:30. All children must be signed in at the kiosks in the lobby of Trinity Hall or on the 2nd floor landing. You will get a name tag for your child and a parent Pick-Up Badge. If you have trouble with the kiosks, they will give you a temporary name tag for your child and a Pick-Up Badge in the warm up room.

After the children sing they will exit the Sanctuary. The choir parents will take the 3 & 4 year olds to Preschool Worship in the Trinity Hall Building. The K - 3rd grade kids will go to Children's Worship in Trinity Hall. The 4th and 5th grade kids will attend worship with their parents. You may pick up your child at these locations after worship.

Special Sundays and Programs

During the choir year, our Children's Choirs participate in several special services and programs. These are a highlight of the choir year for the children. They work very hard learning and preparing their music.

We talk with the children about the important role they have in leading worship. The songs that they prepare make a real difference to many of the people in our church and community. **We hope that you will make these services and programs a priority for your family.**

Children's Music Sundays Fall & Spring



FALL 2018

3's & 4's meet in Trinity Hall at 10:30. K - 5th meet in the Choir Loft in the Sanctuary at 10:30. Kindergarten must check-in and get nametags and Pick-Up Badges.

SPRING 2019

The 3's and 4's meet in Trinity Hall at 10:30. They must be checked in at the tables inside Trinity Hall. The child and parent are given matching name tags. After they sing they will return to Trinity Hall for a special program.

The 2's, *Spring Music Sunday only*, meet in room TBA at 10:40. They will be signed in and the child and parent are given matching name tags. They will return to room TBA after they sing the Call to Worship.

The K - 5th graders will meet in the Adult Choir Room at 10:15. Kindergarten must be checked in and the child and parent are given matching name tags outside the Choir Room at the Choir Help Desk. The 1st - 5th graders will be checked in on an attendance sheet in the Choir Room.

The Kindergarten - 5th grade choirs sit in the choir loft. The younger choirs stand on the steps in front of the altar.

The kindergarten kids will leave the service after the offertory and go to Trinity Hall for Children's Worship. The 1st - 5th graders will stay in the Choir Loft for the entire service. The children wear their T-shirts for this service.

We will have combined rehearsals on the Wednesday before each **Music Sunday**. The 2, 3 and 4-year old's will go to the Sanctuary and the kindergarten - 5th graders will rehearse in the Choir Room. **The kids will check in and out in their regular choir rooms.**

Children's Music Sunday (Fall)

All the Children's Choirs 3 years - 5th grade sing for an 11:00 worship service. The 3's and 4's sing a call to worship and the Kindergarten - 5th grade sing an offertory and anthem. The 1st - 5th also sing the Benediction.

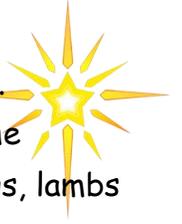
Children's Music Sunday (Spring)

All choirs, age 2 through 5th grade, participate in the Spring Music Sunday. This is not a performance; it is a wonderful worship experience.

The preschool choirs sing two songs for the call to worship and the K through 5th grade choirs sing three songs. The 1st - 5th choirs also sing the benediction.

Children's Nativity

One of the best loved traditions in our church is the annual Children's Nativity. Every December the 3-year-old - 3rd grade choirs present a wonderful retelling of the traditional nativity story. All of the choirs wear costumes, including halos, angel wings, lambs ears and royal robes. The children wear shorts and light colored shirts under their costumes. The Nativity is the first Sunday in December.



The 2nd and 3rd grade choirs are angels, the 1st graders are shepherds, the kindergarten choirs are the children of Bethlehem, the 4 year olds are cherubs and animals and the 3 year olds are the wooly lambs. There is also the wonderful procession of the three kings. This special service reminds us of the real meaning of Christmas.

Children's Nativity Rehearsal



There is always a rehearsal for the Children's Nativity on the Saturday before the Children's Nativity. The choirs arrive at different times during the morning to rehearse their own songs. There is a complete run through around 10:45. The rehearsal is usually over by 11:30. You will receive a December Schedule at registration and in the mail that will tell you what time your child's choir will rehearse.

Christmas Eve

All our choir children, age 3 years - 5th grade, are invited to sing for the 3:00 or 4:30 Christmas Eve Service. These candle light services are designed for families with young children. There is a live Nativity, lots of familiar carols and short sermon.

The children meet in the Adult Choir Room on the 2nd floor of the Trinity Hall building at 2:40 or 4:10 to warm up. All the children wear Christmas colors. After the children sing, they sit with their families.

Musicals



The 4th and 5th grade choir will perform two musicals during the year, one in December and one in the spring. Both musicals will involve extra rehearsal time. All parents of 4th and 5th grade choir kids will receive a detailed schedule in the mail.

Choir Parties

Halloween

On the Wednesday, closest to Halloween, all of the Children are invited to wear their Halloween costumes to choir. **Children cannot wear scary or "horror" type costumes.** All the kids will receive a small "treat".



All our choirs will dismiss at 6:00 for a family supper and "Trunk or Treating" in the church parking lot sponsored by the Children's Ministry. It's a lot of fun! Reservations are required for the dinner. **There will be NO Trunk or Treat in 2018 because Halloween is on a Wednesday.**

Christmas Parties

In December, all of the choirs will have a Christmas Party. This will include snacks, a craft and games. Parties will be different in each choir.

End-of-the-Year Choir Celebrations

We have multiple celebrations for the last Children's Choir rehearsal in April. The **2, 3 and 4-year-old choirs** will have parties in the choir rooms from 6:00 - 6:30.

The kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade choirs will have a pizza party with games in their own choir rooms. Kindergarten is 6:00 - 6:30 and 1st and 2nd grade is 5:45 - 6:30.

The 3rd - 5th grade choirs will have a separate party with food and games in the Adult Choir Room from 5:45 - 6:30. Previous parties have included a taco bar and make your own sundaes



How Can I Help?

Our AFUMC Children's Choir program involves many parent volunteers. We are always looking for people to work with our program who want to share their faith and make a difference in the lives of children in our church and community. For more information, or to volunteer, contact Ann Hudson at 770-475-5576 or email at ahudson@afumc.org ***Come join our Children's Music family!***

Following is a list of volunteer opportunities:

Directors or Assistant Directors - Most of our choirs have a Director and an Assistant Director. The Assistant Director position is great if you are new to directing.

Accompanists - We need people who can play the piano to accompany our choirs. The level of difficulty varies with the age of the choir. We can also use guitarists and other instrumentalists.

Choir Parents - Choir Parents help with rehearsals, take attendance, mail post cards, help with programs and plan social events. We need lots of parents to help in all our choirs.

Administrative Help - These volunteers help at the Children's Choir Desk on Wednesday afternoons during rehearsals or at other times during the week.

Choir T-Shirts and Cross Program - We need help adding the ribbons and names to crosses for new choir members. We also need help getting our choir t-shirts printed and distributed.

Costumes - We always need people who can sew and mend costumes. Most of our costumes are very simple to make.

Photography - We need people to take pictures of choir events.

Choir Time Projects - You can sign up to be on an email list that will let you know when we have projects you can work on during choir time. These can be stuffing "goody bags," making halos for angels, cutting ribbons for choir crosses, repairing angel's wings, etc. It's fun, easy and you'll make lots of new friends! There will also be signs posted on the Wednesdays we have projects.



Wednesday Night Church Suppers - Believing & Belonging

Our church has a wonderful family supper on Wednesday evenings. The food is served from 5:15 - 6:45. Families can eat before or after Children's Choir. Go to the afumc.org for more information about reservations, cost and menus. After supper, there are small groups and classes for adults. There are three ways to make a reservation for the Wednesday Night Church Supper.

1. You can fill out the form in the bulletin on Sunday morning and the drop it in offering plate.
2. You can call the Church Office at 770-475-5576 before noon on Monday morning.
3. You can fill out the reservation form on the church web site at afumc.org



Emergency Procedures During Children's Choir Rehearsals

If an emergency occurs during a Children's Choir rehearsal, do NOT go to your child's choir room. The directors and choir parents know what to do and they will be able to move and evacuate the children faster and safer if parents do not fill up the hallways. The directors must account for every child who is with them in choir. You will not be able to take your child until after they reach a designated safe area.

In case of fire, the children will evacuate to a location outside the building. In case of a tornado warning, the choirs will move to the 1st floor nursery hallway in the Trinity Hall building. If you happen to be in one of the hallways during an emergency, please follow the lead of the directors and help them move the choir. **Our goal is the safety of your children.**

Alpharetta First United Methodist Church Children's Choirs

***Helping children discover the
joy of praise and worship
through music!***