

Fourteenth Western Pennsylvania Handbell Festival Director's Seminars

On Saturday, April 5, 2014, the Western PA Handbell Festival will be held at Robert Morris University in Moon Township. This one-day festival is designed for handbell choirs that play level 1 and 2 music; selections that are on the easier side of the difficulty scale. You are invited and encouraged to participate in two learning experiences for beginning handbell/handchime directors and those who are considering assuming this position: New Director's Forum and Conducting Basics. These workshops are open to all directors, not just those bringing choirs to the festival. The cost is \$25 per session.

New Director's Forum 9 AM to 12 noon Campus Chapel

Designed to provide a forum for the discussion of issues facing the new handbell director or persons considering becoming a handbell director. In the morning, participants will spend the first 30 minutes of the seminar, from 9- 9:30 A.M., observing the festival conductor, then spend the next 2.5 hours in a roundtable discussion while the festival rehearsal is taking place. Discussion can continue over lunch!

Topics to be covered in the morning seminar include:

- Equipment: What do I need and how do I take care of it?
- Ringers: How many ringers do I need?
 What skills do new ringers need?
- Music: How do I know what music I should buy?
 How do I "prepare" the music I have selected?
- Rehearsal: How do I prepare myself for the first rehearsal?
 How do I teach my ringers the music?
 How do I run an effective rehearsal?
- Techniques: What exactly are handbell/handchime techniques?
 How can I learn them? How do I teach them?
- Conducting: How do I communicate with my ringers?
- Education: Where can I learn more?
 Are there books that can help me?

A comprehensive set of notes will be provided, outlining all of these items and more and including a bibliography of handbell resources.

Conducting Basics

1:15 p.m.

Campus Chapel

In the afternoon following lunch, we will adjourn to the campus chapel for a workshop on conducting techniques. Topics to be covered in the afternoon workshop include conducting do's and don'ts, basic conducting patterns, tips for teaching rhythms, emphasizing musicality in your rehearsals. Bring your baton if you have one plus all your conducting questions. If you have a specific conducting conundrum, bring along your music for some one-on-one help.

We hope all of you can stay for the entire day to observe rehearsals and participate in the afternoon classes. The festival concert is at 5:30 pm.

The morning seminar clinician will be Nancy Lutz. She is the Artistic Director of the Three Rivers Ringers, Pittsburgh's premier handbell ensemble. Nancy is also director of handbells at Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church in Pittsburgh where she has two adult ensembles. Nancy is active in both the Area 2 and National Handbell Musicians of America.

Elisabeth Heath Charles will lead the afternoon Conducting Workshop. She is a former ringer and board member of the Three Rivers Ringers and also rings with The Chapel Bells at Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church. From 2001–2005 she rang with the Ladies Handbell Team and also served as the Conductor of Ringers II Handbell Team at Southminster Presbyterian Church in Mt. Lebanon. Mrs. Charles is the Director of Bands at Robert Morris University and was previously the Conductor and Music Director of the Butler County Symphony Orchestra.

If you are in need of help and suggestions or even if you just want some new ideas, please consider registering for the New Directors Forum and/or the Conducting Basics Workshop. The cost for each session is \$25. You may register by email or by writing to Cynthia Donahoe, Festival Registrar. Checks should be made to the Western PA Directors' Group.

Cynthia Donahoe, Festival Registrar
Western PA Handbell Festival
108 Halsey Court
Pittsburgh, PA 15228
412-571-0273 wpa@threeriversringers.org