

Adult Choir Guidelines



Saints Peter & Paul Maronite Church

September 2017

1059 Ashland Ave. Simi Valley. CA 93065



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Introduction

Sing to the Lord a new song

Singing should always be a joyous activity. The Ministry of Choir is one means by which joy is expressed through singing. The members of the adult choir at Saints Peter and Paul Maronite Mission seek to celebrate the liturgy in a manner that promotes participation by all with joy, respect, and reverence.

Maronite Teaching about the Role of the Choir and the Singing in Church

دور الجوقة

للترنيم مكانة محورية في الاحتفال الطقسي لاسيما في الليتورجيات الشرقية. إنه التعبير عن اتحاد كنيسة الأرض بكنيسة السماء في أداء نشيد الشكر والتمجيد الذي ترفعه الكنيسة بلا انقطاع إلى الأب السماوي لمحبتته التي تجلت بالخلاص الذي حققه الابن ويتممه الروح في العالم؛ والألحان الكنسية هي انعكاس لتسبيح الملائكة في ليتورجيا الحمل، من هنا امتازت الليتورجيات بإتقان الألحان وكان لا بد من جوقات مدربة تقوم بهذه الخدمة. والطقس الماروني الذي يتميز بألحان جميلة ذات طابع شعبي لم يحصر الخدمة اللحنية بالجوقة، بل تميّزت جوقة المرتلين بمساعدة الشعب على تأدية الألحان، وهذه من أبرز ميزات هذا الطقس. من هنا لا بد أن تعي الجوقات المارونية اليوم هذه الثوابت الطقسية التي تطبع لليتورجيتها المارونية وتقوم بخدمة الاحتفال بإتقان وروحانية فتنناغم الأصوات العذبة بالقلوب المصلية، فتشكّل بذلك الجوقة العنصر المساعد للجماعة المصلية على المشاركة في الألحان وفق الأصول الموسيقية وبروحانية وخشوع مميّزين. لذلك على الجوقة كما على المرتلين الإفراديين أن



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يلتزموا بما تمليه عليهم طبيعة الاحتفال الطقسيّ وقواعده، دون تعديّ على حقّ المؤمنين بالمشاركة؛ فالليتورجيا للشعب ولا يحقّ للجوقة أن تأخذ مكان الشعب؛ دور الجوقة مساعد لا مستقلّ واختيارها للألحان يجب أن يتطابق مع الأصول الطقسيّة، من هنا وجب التنسيق بين المحتفل والجوقة وفريق العمل الطقسيّ في تحضير الاحتفالات في الرعية فلا يسمح بعد ذلك بالارتجال والمزاجيّة في هذا الشأن.

وفي هذا السياق وجب التمييز والفصل بين الجوقة الطقسيّة حيث تؤدّي مهامها خلال الإحتفالات والكورس الدينيّ الذي يعنى بإحياء ترانيم كنسيّة خارج نطاق الاحتفال الطقسيّ.

وعلى الجوقة والمرتلين الإفراديين أن يمارسوا مهمّاتهم بتقوى خالصة وترتيب يليق بخدمة بيت الله وسرّه الخلاصيّ، وهم يتمتّعون بروح طقسيّة مشبعة بثقافة ليتورجيّة وروحانيّة وأداء خشوعيّ مصلّ.

الموسيقى الكنسيّة

الموسيقى في الكنيسة هي إرث عريق وكنز ثمين للغاية؛ منبعه الأوّل هو الكتاب المقدّس والتقاليد الكنسيّة والشعبيّة وما الترتيل إلاّ صلاة الكنيسة المباركة التي لا تتفصل عن الاحتفال الطقسيّ. لذا، توصي الكنيسة بضرورة إتقان التراتيل المقدّسة لتعبّر في المعنى واللحن عن إيمان الكنيسة الوطيد عبر الصلاة المرئمة بلحنٍ شجيّ، يناغم القلب بالصوت في تسابيح ترتفع إلى الأب بوقار وجلال.

وعليه، يوصي المجمع المقدّس بالحفاظ على قواعد التقليد اللحنيّ المارونيّ المعروف في كلّ صلواته واحتفالاته ورتبه الطقسيّة، على أن يراعى الهدف الأوّل للموسيقى الكنسيّة وهو تمجيد الله وتقديس المؤمنين؛ وتكفّف، لهذه الغاية، لجنة موسيقيّة خاصّة تتنبثق عن اللجنة البطريركيّة للشؤون الطقسيّة، توجّه التآليف الموسيقيّ الكنسيّ وفق مقاييس لحنية ولاهوتيّة ثابتة وواضحة، وتسهر على كلّ الأعمال



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الموسيقى الجديدة وتبدي رأيها قبل أن توافق عليها المراجع الكنسيّة المختصة. وليتمّ الإهتمام بجمع التراث الموسيقيّ المارونيّ وتجديده بما يتلاءم وحاجات المؤمنين في كلّ بقعة انتشروا فيها. ولنشجّع في هذا الإطار، الجوقات في الكاتدرائيّات لتسهم في إشراك جماعة المؤمنين الفعّالة في كلّ احتفال طقسّي؛ كما يوصي المجمع بأن تعنى الإكليريكيّات وأديرة الرهبان والراهبات بتدريس الموسيقى والألحان الكنسيّة، لاسيّما تراث المزامير الذي يشكل غنى موسيقيّاً مميّزًا. [67]

Mission Statement

The Mission of St Peter and Paul Choir is to glorify God in hymns, as well as to inspire, motivate and engage the community in sacred songs. This will be accomplished with combined professionalism and spirituality according to the Maronite Catholic liturgy.

Values

Our values are grounded in:

Cooperation & **C**ommitment

Harmony

Opportunity

Invovement

Responsibility & **R**espect



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Vision Statement

Our vision as SPP Choir is to become a professional spiritual choir where members cooperate in order to achieve their fullest potential, so that they can make their best contribution to themselves, to family, to the church, and to God. At SPP Choir, it is envisioned that:

- Our singing will become more proficient:
 - Through building up our repertoire of hymns
 - Through perfecting our individual as well as our common performance skills.
 - Through enriching our knowledge of the liturgy and various liturgical seasons of the church
- Our spiritual character will be enhanced
 - through a moment of prayer (preceding and following each rehearsal and each performance)
 - through attending spiritual retreats and/or activities

Choir Membership Prayer

**Grant us O lord,
That what we sing with our lips,
Expresses what we believe in our hearts,
And that what we believe in our hearts,
We show it forth in our lives.**



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Choir Membership Requirements

To become a choir member, one shall:

- be 18 years old or older
- be a practicing Catholic registered as a member of Saints Peter and Paul Church
- possess a love and reasonable skill for singing
- attend rehearsals and Sunday's/feast days' liturgies on a regular basis
- be willing to abide by all the rules and regulations listed in this handbook
- have a positive attitude and a team spirit as "*there is no I in a Team*"

PS: These requirements are exclusive for the adult choir; there are age and other requirements for any possible children or youth choir, which will be written in their appropriate handbook.

Membership Recruitment and Training

Recruitment

Recruiting period is two weeks before the designated liturgical season starts; persons interested in becoming a choir member or those who lost their membership for any reason, are encouraged to fill out a membership application form and give it to the coordinator in order to sign up for the choir. Those potential members will be invited to attend two choir rehearsals on the corresponding nights before being accepted as official members. Final decision for possible membership is to be made and announced expressly to the concerned person, by the coordinator after consulting the pastor and the director.



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The Maronite Liturgical Year 2016 / 2017

1- The Season of the Birth of the Lord
05 Nov 2016----05 Jan

2- Epiphany Season
06 Jan 2017----- 10 Feb

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Recruiting period: Oct 05 - Oct 19

3- Lent Season
11 Feb 2017 --- 31 March

4- Glorious Resurrection Season
01 April 2017 --- 19 May

Recruiting period: Jan 11 - Jan 25

5- Glorious Pentecost Season
20 May 13 Sept 14

6- Feast of the Cross Season:
Sept 05 Nov 2017

Recruiting period: April 19 - May 03.

Training

All who are interested in joining SPP choir must be willing to attend a weekly rehearsal, as this is the means for training of members. Due to the nature of this ministry, a new member shall be required to attend 2(two) rehearsals before he/she will be allowed to sing at the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Leave of absence

Due to various life circumstances, it may be necessary for a member to be absent from the choir for an extended period of time with the intention of returning when circumstances change. Member(s) requesting an extended leave of absence should contact the Director and/or the coordinator. After the request is granted, upon returning the member will be required to attend one (1) rehearsal before singing at the Sunday Mass. A member who misses three (3) consecutive weeks of service and/or rehearsal without a valid explanation will be considered voluntarily resigned. Excuses for absence should be given personally to the coordinator before the rehearsal time. Excuses are to be validated only by the coordinator; examples of valid excuses are sickness, accident, travel, death in the family, etc.

Should the member decide to return to the choir he/she will be accepted as a new choir member. As stated under "Recruitment", the returned member will be unable to perform for the rest of the



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liturgical season, and to wait till next recruiting period, and then attend no less than two (2) rehearsals before he/she is allowed to participate in singing at the Sunday Mass.

If you are unable to attend a rehearsal or Sunday liturgy please contact the current coordinator Haytham Effarah at (805) 208-1044 or by email: hjeffarah@icloud.com

Officers and their responsibilities

The officers for each choir shall be Director, Assistant Director, Musician, and Coordinator.

Director/musician

Responsibilities of the director are to:

- conduct rehearsals and lead the choir during liturgies
- provide impartial and inspiring leadership to the choir in coordination with the coordinator or pastor
- set the day and time for rehearsals with the coordinator
- assist the choir in preparations and delivery of songs
- appoint leads and soloists
- carry out requests made by the pastor including planning and attending meetings
- choose the songs after coordination with the pastor

PS: In the event the director is not present, the assistant director will act as the director. In the event the director and the assistant director are not present, the designated musician will act as the director.

Coordinator

The coordinator is to be appointed by the Pastor after consulting all the choir's members. The coordinator shall not be a member in SPP choir. A current coordinator could be reappointed only for one additional 2 years-term.

Working in cooperation with the director and musician, the coordinator(s) shall be responsible for:

- acting as the contact person between the pastor and the choir



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- gathering input and feedback from the Church community
- ensuring that each member receives and signs a copy of the choir handbook
- collaborating, contacting, and reminding choir members about schedules' change, rehearsals times, and/or special performances
- Sharing and discussing with the choir members any critical issue that he/she would get from the pastor/ community

General Choir Etiquette

“Commit Respect Enjoy”

It is expected that a choir member conducts oneself as a model for others to follow. As part of the inspiration and motivation that choir members seek to bring to the Saints Peter and Paul Community, ***all members of SPP choir will be required to:***

- be committed to the choir and to rehearsal times
- be punctual by reporting to rehearsal at the designated time and to the Divine Liturgy no more than 15 minutes before the beginning of Mass, or at the appointed time in case of special celebrations.
- When the word of God is being proclaimed, or the choir is singing, anyone who is tardy should wait and take his/her seat at the end of the reading or song.
- Show reverence and respect for our God when entering the church by refraining from socializing or engaging in idle talk.
- give undivided attention to the director at all times
- Respect the knowledge and abilities of the director
- respect other choir members and discuss emergent ideas/issues with the coordinator privately
- be attentive to all members during performance
- ask questions and clarifications at an appropriate time without causing disruption or delay of rehearsal.



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- keep calm and be humble
- refrain from making initiatives or last minutes' decisions unless asked by the director or the pastor
- keep an open heart and innovative spirit to learn new songs

- respect silence time as defined by the director
- refrain from engaging in private conversation during rehearsal or liturgy
- refrain from drinking or eating during Mass times
- turn cellphone on "Jesus Christ" (airplane) mode
- wait for the end of the Communion time of the congregation in order to receive the communion in group as a choir afterwards

General Guidelines

- All rehearsals and warm ups must be concluded no later than 5 minutes prior to the beginning of the Divine liturgy, so as to preserve a prayerful atmosphere in the Church.
- Dress code: In order to promote harmony and unity among members of the choir, all choir members will be attired alike, preferably in robes.
- Conflict Resolution

In order to avoid conflict or disharmony, choir members are expected to refrain from asking controversial questions that may cause a distraction and/or unrest during rehearsals. If this type of question must be asked, it should be asked after rehearsal to the following persons in the following order: Coordinator, and then Director. If the aforesaid persons cannot resolve the issue(s) the choir member(s) may make an appointment with the pastor for further assistance.

In order to resolve the issue, the pastor will consult the officers of the choir to ascertain if any policy mentioned in the guidelines was violated by the member or not enforced by the officers.

In all cases, the direction of the pastor will remain final.



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I, the undersigned choir member, have read the aforementioned Mission, Vision, Values and Choir Etiquette, and Guidelines, and I resolve to respect and abide by them for the glory of God and for the strengthening and upbuilding of His Holy Church

Full Name	Signature
1. _____.	_____.
2. _____.	_____.
3. _____.	_____.
4. _____.	_____.
5. _____.	_____.
6. _____.	_____.
7. _____.	_____.
8. _____.	_____.
9. _____.	_____.
10. _____.	_____.
11. _____.	_____.
12. _____.	_____.
13. _____.	_____.
14. _____.	_____.
15. _____.	_____.