

Burlingame United Methodist Church

Expectations and Guidelines for Worship Bands

Our ministry is not primarily about music, but about serving God and our congregation. We are called to be resources for God, and we offer our gifts for God's glory. Worship is a precious time when we gather to turn and orient our hearts to God, creating a space for the Holy Spirit to flow freely in the hope that lives might be transformed by the mysterious power of God's grace. Our worship team provides leadership and models worship for the congregation.

We strive for excellence in our worship and in the music that we present, because God deserves our best offering. However, our priority and attention is focused on cultivating worshipful attitudes, devotion to God, growing servant hearts, and strengthening and deepening as disciples of Jesus. As we lead, we also worship -- for we cannot take people where we aren't going! As we model Christian devotion, we also model Christian discipleship -- for an authentic experience of God's grace calls us beyond the worship space to living lives that honor God and serve the hurting, lost and lonely within and outside our walls. Again, we cannot lead people where we are not going.

We are part of a larger team that has been organized to provide a meaningful, thoughtful and appropriate worship experience, and that provides opportunities for people to respond to God's grace beyond the worship experience. We will work together as a team to foster a collaborative environment, understanding that at times we will be called to make changes and sacrifices for the better of the church as a whole. As a team, we surrender ourselves to larger goals and objectives, allowing God to use us to support the work of the church.

When we stand before the congregation, we are the instruments God is using to inspire, motivate and encourage hearts to enter into worship and into an encounter with the living God. Each of us must embrace the idea that we are accountable for this ministry. In understanding this we become people who are motivated in purpose, instead of just performers standing on a stage.

Team Member Requirements

Throughout the Bible we read that music has always been an integral and important part of worship -- so important that *skilled* musicians were sought after and set aside specifically for this purpose. With that context in mind, below are the minimal requirements for contemporary worship team members:

- ÿ A servant's heart and the desire to be used as God's tool, leading others in worship.
- ÿ Instrumentalists and singers should be able to demonstrate an acceptable level of musical ability. This may include the ability to play from a lead sheet or transpose to different keys if required. The ability to read music and to learn by ear are both helpful skills to develop, as they speed up the learning process for new songs for the whole group.
- ÿ Purchase of recorded music if necessary.
- ÿ Be organized and committed to the team, ministry and the time necessary for rehearsals and services.
- ÿ Team members must be able to work in a collaborative atmosphere, and be open to helpful critique when needed.
- ÿ Creativity is required. Be expected to be challenged and to challenge others.

Joining the Team

Interested musicians are invited to explore the possibility of joining the worship ministry by filling out an Interest Form and participating in an audition. If the information gained in that discernment process indicates a potential member and the community may benefit from that person's joining the team, one may be invited to join the ministry on a trial basis. The length of this period and the level of participation will vary from person to person depending on their gifts and on the needs of the group and of the church as a whole.

Team Member Responsibilities

In concert with the requirements for team members, there are also several team and personal responsibilities that each member commits to managing as part of the ministry:

- ÿ Members scheduled to serve at a given worship celebration are expected to attend the rehearsal for that celebration and to arrive on time.
- ÿ If a member is not able to attend a rehearsal or worship celebration, s/he is expected to contact another member who plays/sings that part and arrange for a substitute. If unable to arrange a substitute, advanced notice to the Worship Leader is requested as soon as possible.
- ÿ Members are expected to come to rehearsal prepared, having reviewed distributed music, listened to recordings (when available) and practiced on their own time. This will maximize the group's limited rehearsal time together. They will also contact the Worship Leader in advance of rehearsal if they need extra help on a particular song.
- ÿ Absences should be limited to illness, vacation or unavoidable out of town commitments.
- ÿ Each member is responsible for the organization and maintenance of their own music and musical equipment.
- ÿ Musicians should be flexible and willing to change personal styles to accommodate the entire team or desired worship context.
- ÿ Singers are to provide visual inspiration for worship and should encourage the congregation to lift their voices in praise.
- ÿ All worship team members are ***strongly encouraged*** to actively participate in other small groups for spiritual growth as well as in hands-on mission projects through BUMC. We strive to share the work on the team so that no one person is carrying such a load that they neglect their own spiritual growth and discipleship responsibilities as a part of the greater faith community. We are reminded that members of our church are asked to make a commitment of their prayers, presence, gifts and service, including participation in at least one short-term small group / Bible study and one mission project per year, as well as making a sacrificial financial commitment to the church's mission.

Final Thoughts

In the musician's world, it is easy to get sidetracked and concentrate on performance or recognition. The worship music is just one aspect of a worship lifestyle. Music is the vehicle, but the goal is God's presence. Excellence is only useful in our music for one reason: to provide an atmosphere for people to enter into God's presence, free from distraction.

We strive to be best we can be, as musicians and as people, for one another, for those we lead, and ultimately for the God who has provided us with gifts for the one purpose of giving them back, with thanksgiving, and for building up the Body of Christ.

Time will shape our work, our ministry, and our relationships. We strive to be open to God's leading in this community, and in everything we do we pray for God's guidance and blessing.

Please feel free to share your thoughts and questions about these expectations and guidelines. Our Pastors and Worship Leader are always available to hear you.