GBC Worship Manual (revised Jan 2026)

Introduction – Sunday Mornings at GBC:

At GBC, our mission is to Proclaim God's Excellencies (1 Pet 2:9). We seek to do that inwardly, as we encourage and build up one another through God's Word; outwardly, as we reach out to our lost world with the sure hope of the Gospel; and upwardly, as we proclaim back to God the majesty of His worth. As we think about our worship services, and the music that is such an important part of our services, we want God to be at the center of all we do.

One of GBC's four core commitments is: Christ-Exalting Congregational Worship. Sunday mornings are the most important gathering of our church body *to express Christ Exalting Worship.* We see these times of coming under God's Word together, *singing His praises,* having fellowship of the Spirit together and regularly participating in the Lord's Supper as absolutely essential for the life of any individual believer. As the body gathers together, our desire is to see each member of the body recognize, revel in, and respond rightly to the glory of God in Christ Jesus through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (taken from Bob Kauflin's definition of worship).

Various elements in the worship service contribute to this exaltation of God and are an encouragement to the believer as well as a witness to any nonbeliever who may be with us. The center-piece of the service is the preaching of God's Word. We strive to cause the other elements of the service to revolve around the theme of the passage that is preached, whether it be the prayers (opening, pastoral, or closing prayers), testimonies that are shared to encourage the body, and the songs that are sung.

This manual largely has to do with the singing that we do at GBC. We want our congregation to engage with God as we sing. We want to obey Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God." As we hear one another's praises (hence, keeping the volume of the worship band moderate!), our hearts are encouraged and God is glorified.

Index to this manual:

I. The Worship Music Director (p.2-3)

II. Criteria for Choosing Songs (p.3)

III. Serving on the Worship Team

A. Qualifications (p.4)

B. The onboarding process (p.4-5)

C. Rehearsals and scheduling (p.5)

D. Dress code policy (p.5-6)

E. Policy with regard to working with minors (p.6)

F. Having a consistent walk (p.7)

I. The Worship Music Director

The Worship Music Director, serving under our Senior Pastor, executes all aspects of our worship services. We see this as a pastor/elder type role, where God's Word is being taught to the whole body, so this role is to be filled by a spiritually-qualified, and musically-gifted man (according to our complementarian understanding of gender roles in the church – 1 Tim 2:12).

Additionally, we desire the Music Ministry at GBC to be a true community, and provide an environment where those serving in the ministry are given the opportunity to grow not only in their giftings and talents, but also in their love for the Lord. The Worship Music Director seeks to encourage, teach, and train volunteers to improve their skill set, and to provide opportunities for them to do so. He also seeks to disciple, teach, and mentor the volunteers through time spent in God's Word, and in praying together and in being a Christ-honoring example to them.

His **responsibilities** to help meet these goals include:

(1) Planning the music for our weekly worship services with the engagement of our Senior Pastor (see below for comments with regard to song selection).

(2) As the primary worship music leader, modeling and leading worship that engages both the head and the heart – drawing people in, encouraging participation, and pointing to Christ.

(3) Coordinating the scheduling of all our volunteers for the music ministry, as well as AV support. This is done through the use of our Planning Center software, which is used for communicating with all members of our music and AV teams.

(4) Recruiting, auditioning, teaching, and training musicians and coordinating the recruiting and training of AV volunteers to serve the congregation as a team with musical and technical skill, and humility.

(5) Leading weekly rehearsals that serve these purposes: (a) preparation for Sunday services; (b) cultivation of Christ-centered community; (c) personal encouragement and discipleship of fellow servants.

(6) Meeting weekly with our Senior Pastor to debrief past services and plan future services.

(7) Proposing an annual budget for the worship ministry.

II. Criteria for Choosing & Approving Songs [this from our Core Commitments]

As we put together sets of songs for our worship services, we ask these questions in the selection of songs:

(1) Are the lyrics doctrinally sound? We recognize that some songs may be very popular and enjoyable to sing, but may have messages that aren't clearly supported by Scripture.

(2) Along similar lines, we also ask, Are the lyrics clear? That is, do we truly understand what they're saying and what they mean? Or, are they open to multiple interpretations (perhaps even interpretations that would not fit with sound doctrine)?

(3) Is there significant theological depth? We believe a regular diet of singing songs with theological depth contributes significantly to the spiritual health of the believer, and plays an important part of the believer's spiritual growth alongside the teaching of God's Word. Some songs may be quite simple and lack detailed depth, and yet are treasured songs that speak to the heart in a unique way (e.g., a simple hymn like "My Jesus, I Love Thee"). When singing such songs, we strive to group them with other songs that have more theological depth (e.g., a song like "In Christ Alone"). We recognize that songs are an important part of the teaching ministry in our corporate worship. As cited earlier, Colossians 3:16 tells us: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

(4) Is the song fairly easy to sing? Some songs are more conducive for solo voices, rather than singing as a congregation. Other songs may be too complicated to easily learn. We want our people to be able to go home humming the songs they've sung to the Lord that morning!

We also strive to have a balance of time-tested hymns of faith, loved and sung by many past generations, and also newer songs that God has given His Church through those He has gifted in our day. We also value having a variety of musical styles. We believe varying how we incorporate songs and prayers and testimonies and other elements of worship helps keep our services engaging and fresh.

The Worship Music Director is responsible for introducing new songs that follow the above criteria, and once a new song has been introduced to the congregation, the elders will have the opportunity at the following regular monthly elders meeting to discuss and evaluate the song to keep or remove the song from the approved song list.

III. Serving on the Worship Team

A. Qualifications

(1) To have a clear testimony of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

(2) To have a solid, growing walk with the Lord. We recognize that all believers are at different levels of maturity, and that's fine! But the bottom-line is that though we all are in process, we want our worship team members, who are in front of our body leading in worship, not to have hidden, obvious sins, from which they have not repented. See also point III.F. below.

(3) To have attended GBC regularly for at least three months. This gives any potential musician a chance to get to know the church a bit, and for the leadership of the church to get to know them.

(4) To commit to taking our GBC membership class, with the intention of joining the church. We would like all believers who call GBC their church home, to formally join us as part of this covenant community.

(5) Musical (or in the case of A/V volunteers, technical) proficiency. We recognize that we are largely an amateur group, and that's great. But, as we seek to honor the Lord, and to serve our church body, we should always be striving to improve our musical abilities. We expect our musicians to commit to practicing, and to do the best they can as they serve the Lord and his people.

B. The Onboarding Process

(1) A potential servant in our worship ministry (either in music or A/V) communicates their interest in serving with our Worship Music Director. It may also be that someone in the church (like the Worship Music Director) hears about someone's gifts and potential interest, and contacts them.

(2) The Worship Music Director meets with the potential new member of the team and speaks to them of the qualifications for service, and auditions them to determine their skill level. The Worship Music Director will keep the Senior Pastor abreast of these meetings.

(3) If such a person meets the qualifications, he or she will be invited to rehearse with the team.

(4) The readiness of a new recruit for Sunday morning worship is largely at the discretion of the Worship Music Director but typically there should be at least two rehearsals with the worship team. After participation in at least two rehearsals, and all goes well, this

person may be scheduled to serve with the team at an upcoming Sunday service. Praise God!

C. Rehearsals and Scheduling

There are two rehearsals for each Sunday service: the Thursday evening prior to the service, and one hour before the Sunday morning service. All musicians, as well as the sound board operator for that service are needed to be at these rehearsals. The Proclaim operator and livestream operator are needed to be at the Sunday morning rehearsal (and the Proclaim operator is welcome, also, at the Thursday evening rehearsal). Rehearsals begin with a devotional time in the Word and time for prayer, as we want our worship teams to enjoy close-knit fellowship in the Lord around the Word. Our desire is not only to serve together, but to grow in the Lord together, and grow in our understanding of biblical worship (often reading helpful books together), and to simply enjoy being together. Rehearsals will also provide opportunity for continued training for both our musicians and A/V operators.

Our Worship Music Director will endeavor to have teams scheduled for Sundays six weeks in advance. These communications take place through our church's Planning Center software. We appreciate prompt responses from team members as inquiries for each one's availability for service go out from our Worship Music Director! Also, through Planning Center, all team members are able to access service details weeks in advance.

Throughout the year, there also may be other special worship services, for which additional rehearsals will be scheduled. Such events include Good Friday communion service, Christmas Eve candlelight service, and special worship nights or outreaches.

In addition to rehearsals, there will be periodic fellowship dinners planned where whole families of the volunteers can enjoy fellowship together. Also, there may be opportunities for further training off-site as team members may attend conferences on worship together.

D. Dress Code Policy

What a privilege to lead God's people in his worship! We don't want our physical appearances in any way to distract our congregation from focusing on Christ. Rather, we simply want to be channels through whom the Lord works to bless and strengthen his people as they proclaim back to him his excellencies.

We understand that dress-codes can feel like legalism. And we certainly don't want to fall into legalism! Righteousness before God can only be attained through faith in Christ, not in toeing the line on any man-made rules. But how we dress as musicians on the platform is not about being more or less righteous/godly; again, it's about not creating a potential distraction for those who are worshiping.

The key words are MODESTY and RESPECT – we want to be as modest as possible, and show respect for the Lord and our brothers and sisters, in how we dress. And when it comes to modesty, the principle is: if you're wondering if something's not quite appropriate, assume it isn't. It never does any harm if we err on the conservative side.

So, to some specifics -- we realize specifics are necessary, as dressing modestly and respectfully can be quite subjective. The standards below reflect similar policies from other Christian organizations (like Moody Bible Institute).

General Items (Men & Women):

- Clothes should not have holes in them.
- Clothes should not be overly casual. Don't look like you just rolled out of bed (even if you did!). Think of how you would dress if you were attending a funeral and wanted to convey respect for the bereaved. (Note: this is NOT saying you need to dress in any formal type of way, just be neat and orderly.)

For the Women:

- Bottoms:
  - Dresses and skirts: Hemlines are to reach the top of the kneecap, and slits may be 2-inches above the kneecap. No spaghetti straps on dresses.
  - Stretch pants, leggings alone: not allowed.
  - Nothing should be tight fitting. The curves of your body should not be precisely distinguishable.
- Tops:
  - Tank Tops: No spaghetti straps.
  - Necklines should be no lower than four fingers below the collarbone.
  - Nothing should be tight fitting. Wear a sweater over your blouse if you think the blouse might be too tight.

E. Policy with regard to Working with Minors

We take child protection issues seriously. For those serving in ministries to children in our church (like serving in the nursery or teaching Family Bible Hour) we have an application and screening process. Though our music ministry is not a ministry to children, at times there will be those under the age of 18 serving with adults. In these situations, if there are times when an adult will be alone with a minor (say, for a rehearsal), there must be written permission from the minor's parent (an e-mail message is permissible). If the adult is not a regular member of the worship team (say, to practice with a minor for a special music selection), then there must be two adults present with the minor.

F. Having a Consistent Walk

As stated above (in III.A.), we want our worship team members to be examples to the flock in their walks with the Lord. There may be times that for personal reasons, like personal repentance on sin issues, or because of strife in the marriage or family, it will be best for a musician to take a sabbatical from service to concentrate on these personal issues. This is a principle that could apply in any area of service within the church. If in such a situation a person is asked to step down for a time, it certainly is not to shame or punish such a person, but ultimately to build them up in the Lord. At such times such a brother or sister will really need the love and support of the body, particularly his/her fellow musicians, with whom he/she normally serves.