



Finding Rhythms in Nature

Beth Ann Edwards, Area 8 Chair

How's your summer so far? I know that's a loaded question. Like most of you, mine is nothing like I could have imagined just a few short months ago. Daily schedules have changed and my priorities have shifted a bit. Good days far outnumber less-than-good days, but so much uncertainty has certainly taken its toll on my motivation.

Our senior pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church read a devotion at a staff meeting last month. The author discussed how we should use our talents and gifts during this pandemic and be the best we can be. I thought about my current contributions in this light. I'm not directing choirs, I'm not programming artists and music performers, I'm not assisting with worship planning, I'm not ... doing much of anything I had been doing just months ago. I can't define myself by my accomplishments. Upon reflection, my best and only super-power right now is that I am recharging, and I must give myself permission to do so the best way I know how.

Since March 15, I have taken on two activities that have been constants and sanity-savers for me. The first activity is walking. I walk outside almost every single day, and try to reach five miles. The repetitive, rhythmic nature of walking has the same soothing, calming effect as making music and several scientific studies I found on Google confirm my own walking experiences. I would not consider myself an "outdoors" person, but my walks have often been the highlight of my day. I hope this is the beginning of a life-long habit.

The second activity has been to re-acquaint myself with our yard. It had been neglected for a few years, as my summer activities had not left me much time to keep things tidy. Our large trees have created areas of full shade that desperately needed attention. Yardwork is always an ongoing concern, and I thought about the similarities between directing/ringing handbells, and working in the yard. A beautiful yard does not just happen, nor does a well-functioning, musical bell choir. As a director, I'll first work on whatever aspect of making music needs the most attention: rhythm, note accuracy, technique, articulations, etc. Once the most obvious fixable aspect of the music is back in line, other challenges come front and center and demand our focus. This method parallels the gardener's approach to a well-tended

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yard: weeds, bare spots, grass seeding, bedding plants, and more! Once I tend to the most egregious area of the yard, something else calls to me.

I was separating and transplanting hostas until a few weeks ago. Once the hostas reached full size, they could still be transplanted, but recovery time was longer. However, with plenty of water and loving care, they came around and now they are as healthy as ever, with room to expand. I was reminded of the difficulties one experiences when making changes behind the bell table. If ringers are moved to a new spot, or they are asked to change some aspect of their technique, they might “droop” a bit at first, or even for an extended



period of time. But with loving care and persistence, permanent changes can be made, leading to even more opportunities to grow as musicians. With plants and musicians, strong roots are already there. They just need to adjust to a new, always evolving way of growing.

The hosta example applies to me, too, these past few months. I’ve been uprooted and transplanted into a new way of life. My time of “drooping” lasted longer than I imagined or expected. As my roots settle into their new home, I pray for those who are ill, and mourn with those who have been affected by COVID-19. I pray for a sense of peace and spiritual fortification. Along with prayer and meditation, some rest, self-care, and communion with the outdoors will bring me back to my full potential. When I’m called into service, I’ll be positioned to move forward with passion and commitment.

A Note from the Chair Elect

By Sharon Schmidt

I find it hard to believe it's been 3 months since we announced we were canceling the 2020 Festival. Those three months have been quite an experience, although time hasn't rebooted my crystal ball to guide us in scheduling future events. You won't be surprised to learn we don't have any new information about events in 2021 or 2022. Your input will be critical as we navigate this quickly changing world, and I urge you to contact me at chairelect.area8@handbellmusicians.org to share your view on what activities and interactions will help you.

Biennial Meeting Reports

If you missed the Area 8 Biennial Meeting and are interested in Area activities, reports from the Executive Committee and Area 8 board are posted on the Area 8 website during the month of July. To access the reports, please visit here <http://area8.handbellmusicians.org/reports/>

New Members

Plymouth Congregational UCC

Des Moines, Iowa

Christopher Goodson

Bloyce Johnson

Marti West

Matthew Lang

Springfield, Iowa

Trinity Lutheran Ministries

Edwardsville, Illinois

Beverly Diane Schroeder

Area 8 Membership Report

Sharon Schmidt, Chair-Elect

In the last 2 years, the Area 8 total membership has decreased from 407 in October 2018 to 305 on 6/15/20.

- Roughly 5 of those lapsed memberships were provided to organizations loaning equipment to the 2018 Festival.
- Up through March 2020, your board has made over 200 contacts (email, postcard, text, phone call, etc.) with lapsed members.
- Over that time, 47 memberships from the lapsed list were renewed.
- 79 of those memberships lapsed in March 2020 and we have not yet contacted them, as they were granted a grace period through May 2020.
- Of our current memberships, approximately 35 joined in the last two years.

June 2020

Iowa	65
Illinois	99
Kansas	44
Missouri	55
Nebraska	42

How can you help?

- Volunteer to reach out to lapsed members in your state or town by contacting your state chair.
- Let your state chair know about organizations or individuals with bells who aren't members.
- Tell others about the benefits of membership. You might know what benefits would most help them and remind them of the benefits they've received. One option would be to mention an article in Quavers or Overtones that was particularly helpful to you.
- Allow people to voice a suggestion or complaint that they don't know how to make heard. Your contact may elicit that item, and we can address it.
- Reach out and make others feel like they are part of a community. Perhaps you can mention an upcoming event they can attend or ask them what we could do to serve them better.
- Share posts from the Area 8 and your state's Facebook pages! You can also post what's happening with your organization or what you're hoping to do in the future on those pages.

Area 8 Biennial Meeting

June 19, 2020

Beth Ann Edwards, Area 8 Chair

The Area 8 Biennial Meeting was held via Zoom on Friday, June 19, 2020. Reports from officers and board members will be available on the Area 8 website during the month of July. Please read the reports. If you have questions, please contact the board member directly, or send me an email (chair.area8@handbellmusicians.org).

Thank you to all Area 8 members who are invested in promoting the art of handbell ringing. Your membership in this organization is important, and it is noticed! Membership in Handbell Musicians of America is a visible sign that we are dedicated to furthering our art now and laying the groundwork for future handbell musicians. Our mission tells us who we are individually and corporately: Handbell Musicians of America is dedicated to advancing the musical art of handbell/handchime ringing through education, community and communication. In addition, our vision gives us a framework and a goal: Uniting people to create a diverse community in which handbell musicians of all skill levels realize their full potential through a musically respected art form. The HMA Board of Directors packed a lot of meaning and expectations into those two sentences, and I believe that we in Area 8 live up to our mission and vision every time we ring, direct, plan, recruit, attend concerts, and mention handbells in conversation.

Area 8 is special to me. I was born in Area 8 (St. Louis, Missouri) the same year that Handbell Musicians of America was founded. My love for ringing and directing here in the Heartland was meant to be! I can clearly thank Handbell Musicians of America for providing education and community-building events that supported my enthusiasm to be a part of this community. National and Area festivals and seminars have been filled with classes and ringing opportunities that raised my level of musicianship and gave me the desire to become a director. In fact, I love the art of handbell ringing so much, that in 2008 I pursued a graduate degree in church music, with an emphasis in handbells.

My two years as Area 8 Chair have brought opportunities, challenges, and surprises. With the help of the Area 8 Executive Committee, our bimonthly newsletter, Quavers, was overhauled and redesigned. In addition, our website was redeveloped and hosting was transferred to Handbell Musicians of America. Wendi Levitt was instrumental in the website re-do, and I owe her my eternal gratitude. Please spend some time visiting the website and reading past issues of Quavers. State chairs have provided insightful articles and when they are available, concerts and workshops are listed for all who care to attend.

Thank you to all who registered for the biennial Area 8 Festival, More Than Meets the Eye. The Board and Festival Committee were in the final stages of planning, and registration numbers were excellent when we were visited by a global pandemic and stay-at-home orders. With guidance from the Executive Committee, our event planner, and a Kansas City attorney, we were able to cancel the event with no financial obligation.

Without reservation, the Area 8 Executive Committee, full board, and Festival committee are the best leaders with whom I have had the privilege to work and play. They are considerate, enthusiastic, supportive, time-sensitive, hard-working, creative, funny, intelligent, talented, and more! The handbell community has widened my circle of friends in only the best way possible, and it all started right here in Area 8. Thank you all for your contributions to your local handbell choirs, Area 8, and Handbell Musicians of America. Thank you for supporting each other by attending handbell concerts and state and local events. Because of you, our future is bright!

Beth Ann Edwards, Chair
Area 8 Handbell Musicians of America

Area 8 Board Candidates

Chris Peck - Candidate for Chair-Elect

Chris Peck was introduced to handbells during his middle school / high school years at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Gardner, Kansas, with Kipp Willnauer. Chris went on to earn his Bachelor of Arts from Bethany College (Lindsborg, KS) where he had the opportunity to learn from educator, Bethany alum, and Malmk representative, Eunice Tarum. His senior recital included handbells, both as a soloist and a composer.

Chris went on to teach band and choir in public schools in Kansas and Iowa for several years. He has been involved with church music for the past twenty-plus years in various churches throughout Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska. For the past five years, he has served as Director of Choir and Bell Choirs at Trinity Lutheran Church in north Omaha, Nebraska. Chris is also the Choir / Chime Choir Director at Eastmont Towers, a retirement community in Lincoln, Nebraska. Chimes have been a recent addition to the activities available at Eastmont while he has been involved there.



Chris rang for several years in the Omaha area bell choir *River City Ringers*, under the direction of Joyce Miller, and is currently ringing in the Lincoln area bell choir *Bell-issimo*, under the direction of Nancy Youngman. Chris is an accomplished handbell composer / arranger of about 10-12 published handbell pieces.

Chris has served Area 8 and the general handbell world in various capacities. In the early 1990s, he worked behind the scenes at a few Area 8 summer conferences helping shuffle equipment around to various rooms and helping with whatever was necessary. He also served a term as the Area 8 Education (or Chime?) chair. In the later 1990s, he served a term as Iowa's chair. He also spent a couple summers as one of the directors of Intergenerational Handbell Camp, in Parkville, Missouri.

When Chris is not directing bells or choir, or driving a school bus for Lincoln Schools, Chris is training for his next marathon. He is currently training for his first 50-miler, in October.

Chris is married to his wife, Melissa, and lives in Lincoln, Nebraska (Go Big Red!), where they enjoy their small family of rescued cats and dogs.

Area 8 Elections

Voting begins August 1

It's time to elect our next Area 8 Executive Committee members! Every 2 years we elect our Chair Elect, Treasurer, and Secretary. Voting will be open from August 1 through August 30. Look for an email on August 1 with your link to vote. It will go to the email address on file that corresponds to your membership account. Read on for more about our candidates. All are excited to serve Area 8 in planning future events and resources for our members.

Candidates' information can also be found on the website: <http://area8.handbellmusicians.org/2020-elections/>

Nancy Eisemon - Candidate for Chair-Elect

I have been ringing handbells for over thirty years. I was fortunate to learn how to ring with a choir of all new ringers, including the director. From that very first time I held a bell, my passion for handbell ringing has never ceased. I have played in 5 different handbell choirs over the years, and directed an ensemble of "Summer Bells" at my Church. Because of "Handbell Withdrawal Syndrome" I developed during the pandemic, I tried solo ringing this summer. This certainly was a challenge, but so much fun! I have attended numerous Area 8 festivals, and a few National Handbell Seminars. I am a member of the Handbell Musicians of America, and look forward to becoming more involved to share this wonderful art. Presently I am ringing with the *Raphael Ringers*, at St. Raphael's Catholic Church and I also substitute at St. Thomas the Apostle Church.



I currently live in Naperville, Illinois. I am a retired advanced practice nurse with a BS, MPH and CGRN (certification in gastroenterology). I've had numerous job descriptions in the medical field, including nurse endoscopist, Item Development Manager for the American Board of Certification for Gastroenterology Nurses (ABCGN) (item writing, recertification, role delineation, test development), clinical research, and Community/Professional educational programming. I have served on the ABCGN Board and the CCFA Board (Crohn's and Colitis Foundation)

My non-handbell hobbies include traveling, listening to music, playing the accordion, reading, quilting and, of course enjoying my grandchildren!!

Area 8 Board

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Beth Ann Edwards

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Kendall Ladd, Beth McFarland,
Kirsten Hendrickson

IOWA CHAIR

Patrick Gagnon

KANSAS CHAIR

Kipp Willnauer

MISSOURI CHAIR

Cheri Leigh

NEBRASKA CHAIR

Nancy Youngman

Please visit the Area 8
website for contact
information and bios.



Laura Kopff - Candidate for Secretary

Laura was introduced to handbells in her high school's bell choir. She came back to ringing while completing her Ph.D. in Chemistry at UW-Madison as a "fun way to relax." She currently rings with *The Agape Ringers* in Chicago, directs the *Chimeringers* at First Congregational UCC, Naperville and is the Communications Chair for Area 8 of the Handbell Musicians of America. By day, Laura teaches chemistry at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, and when not busy with bells, she enjoys baking, being crafty, and playing board games.



Sara Washington - Candidate for Secretary

Sara Washington started her handbell ringing career at First UMC in Manhattan, KS in 1975 and directing at First Baptist in Arlington, TX in 1991. She has been selected for many advanced and auditioned choirs at HMA sponsored events, for the Solo and Ensemble Dream Team, rang at Bay View Week of Handbells, and has rung in and directed choirs across 8 states. Sara helped start several community choirs: *The Rhapsody Ringers* of Manhattan, KS (1978), *Tulsa Festival Ringers* (1991) *Kansas City Handbells* (1997) and *Rezound! Handbell Ensemble* of Kansas City (2001), has served two terms as Secretary for Area 8 Handbell Musicians of America, and over the years has directed and taught at festivals, workshops and camps. Wanting a challenge while living in Atlanta, GA she rang with three advanced choirs: *Geneva Ringers* at Central Presbyterian Church, *The Atlanta Concert Ringers* and *Golden Bells* of Atlanta, and subbed at many churches throughout the city. Sara and her husband Syl recently moved back to Kansas City to be closer to her huge family (9 sibs + 4 steps and their families). She enjoys family gatherings, biking, walking, baking, sewing, reading and training her new pound puppy, Sisko.

Linda Lunt - Candidate for Treasurer

Linda Lunt has been involved with music from a young age, playing piano and singing in various choirs. She minored in music while earning her B.S. in Computer Science from Rutgers University in New Jersey. She had the privilege of touring Poland with her college choir. Linda has sung with the *Apollo Chorus* of Chicago, the *DuPage Chorale* and the *Elmhurst Choral Union*. She has served as Secretary on the Board of *Spirito! Singers*, a girls community choral organization.

Linda was introduced to handbells as an adult after her children were born. She first rang in a church choir and then with *Chicago Bronze*, an auditioned community group where she served as President for two years. Since 2007 she has been a member of *The Agape Ringers*. She has served as Treasurer for five years and has chaired their holiday production for six years. Linda has been an instructor at state and Area events and has enjoyed attending Bayview Week of Handbells.

Linda is also the Director of Handbells at Bethel United Church of Christ in Elmhurst, IL. She has directed their children's and adult bell choirs. She teaches preschool music classes at Bethel Learning Center.

Linda is married with two grown children. She enjoys reading, games and movies and family time. She once enjoyed travel and looks forward to being able to enjoy it again!



Lori Fenton - Candidate for Treasurer

Lori Fenton began ringing bells 35 years ago in Sioux City, Iowa. For the last 26 years she has lived in Des Moines, Iowa, where she currently rings with the *Des Moines Concert Handbells*, of which she is a founding member. She has served Area 8 previously as Iowa Chair and currently serves as Area Treasurer. She has participated in several national ringing events over the past 15+ years including the Bay View Week of Handbells, Distinctly Bronze East and West and Virtuoso, an advanced ringing event sponsored by the *Raleigh Ringers*. She toured Italy with *Desert Bells* and attended the International Symposium in Vancouver in 2016.

Lori is also an accomplished vocalist and sings with numerous groups in Des Moines including the *Des Moines Vocal Arts Ensemble*, *Des Moines Community Orchestra* and her church choir, where she serves as the Alto section leader.

Lori's board experience includes currently serving as the Vice President for the *Des Moines Concert Handbells*, Treasurer (and Past President) for *Des Moines Vocal Arts Ensemble* and Vice Chair for the Board of Music and Fine Arts at her church.

Lori earned a BA in Accounting from Buena Vista College and has spent 26 years working in the life insurance industry. Outside of work and music, Lori enjoys traveling, all things Disney, listening to podcasts and being a cat mom.





Kendall Ladd

Central/Southern Illinois State Chair

Kendall Ladd

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Handbell Services Rep

Debi Robey

Handchime Loan Program Coordinator

Patti Mangis

Food Coordinator

Anna Piro

The Privilege We Have: Acknowledgement and Action

By Kendall Ladd, Central/Southern Illinois Chair

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position or viewpoint of Area 8 or Handbell Musicians of America.

As I write this, I can't help but reflect on the recent events that have taken place: the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, the protests taking place here in the United States as well as abroad, and the Black Lives Matter Movement. As a white woman in the United States, I find that this is a critical time to not only recognize my own privilege but also acknowledge racial inequalities and systematic racism that is present in our country. These problems are present in all aspects of our society, including in music and in the handbell community. It is no secret that handbells are an extremely privileged instrument, and subsequently one that requires a certain level of privilege with which to become involved. To most, the cost of bells is already astronomical, and that initial cost doesn't include the additional equipment, maintenance, and music that is so often needed or required. I think that can be visualized by the lack of diversity within our handbell community. However, I don't want to overshadow or trivialize the bigger issues that we are facing by focusing on handbells and the handbell community specifically. In fact, I struggled when deciding whether or not to write about this topic and want to bring those questions to light in hopes that they will challenge your thinking and help spark conversations among you and your fellow ringers.

Start having conversations.

Challenge yourself and others.

Take action.

- Is this the right platform to be writing about this? If not, what is considered to be the right platform? Where do we draw the line between acceptable and unacceptable when having these kinds of discussions? Is my privilege what is even giving me a choice to not discuss this in certain forums -- such as Quavers?
- National didn't discuss this issue, so should I try to address it myself? Well, what change has ever been accomplished by waiting for someone else to act first? Isn't seeking others' approval or unspoken validation by following their actions counterintuitive in a way? Doesn't that show that I am not willing to fight for my own beliefs and the rights of others? After all, as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich said, "well-behaved women seldom make history." Perhaps this is one of those moments.

- Will other people take offense to this or am I overstepping by writing it? Should it matter? Again, this is such an important issue. If other people take offense, aren't those the people you want to be offending anyways?

With that being said, I think there are important resources that can also be acknowledged to help further our discussions and understanding of these issues. Quite recently, in the Fall 2019 Edition of Overtones, P.L. Grove wrote an article about diversity and inclusion in the handbell community (“Seeking Inclusion”). It is a great resource to start thinking about what we, as a handbell community, could do specifically. However, there are many other resources available to help you challenge your thinking about diversity and inclusion more broadly. These resources include books (e.g., *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou), movies and television shows (e.g., *13th*, *American Son*, *Dear White People*, *When They See Us*), and podcasts (e.g., *1619*, *About Race*, *Code Switch*, *Seeing White*). Start thinking about what changes YOU can make yourself and actions YOU can take within your community in general, and with your handbell choirs, friends, and colleagues. Start having conversations. Challenge yourself and others. Take action. Diversity and inclusion are not topics that have a conclusion, and therefore...

To be continued...



Greetings All!

If you are reading this, please go wash your hands.

By Patrick Gagnon, Iowa Chair

During our first Iowa Handbell Zoom call on May 11, Jan Nyhus, director of the Handbell program at Fjeldberg Lutheran Church in Huxley, Iowa, shared how her bell program is continuing to provide music for worship.

Best Practices

"First of all we are only rehearsing as small groups (7 or fewer ringers). We have tables at the corners of the sanctuary with one table at the center aisle in the front of the sanctuary. Two of my ringers are husband and wife so they are together at one table. We all do wear masks and our own gloves. Each player gets their own bells out of the cases with gloves and masks on, one person at a time. After rehearsal each person is responsible for cleaning and putting their bells back, one person at a time. Social distancing is key. I direct from halfway down a side aisle.

Repertoire

We have been using pieces from:

- Ring with 6 (Percussion) arranged by Martha Lynn Thompson, published by Agape, a Division of Hope Publishing Company
- Ring with 6 – Today's Hymns and Songs arranged by Martha Lynn Thompson, published by Agape, a Division of Hope Publishing
- Bells and Keys...More or Less arranged by Sandra Eithun, published by Choristers Guild.

Plus we have several who are rehearsing duets, bell tree solos, and regular solos. These groups of only one, two or three schedule their own rehearsal times when no one else is in the church. We have a grandmother and her two grandchildren (one going into 4th grade and one going into 8th grade) who have worked up very simple handchime pieces using just the melody line.

Recording

We record audio only with just our bell choir in the building. We set our recording device in the center of the sanctuary. So far, the pieces have turned out very well. We used one as the background music behind pictures of our congregation's mothers and their children on Mother's Day (listen [here](#), bells begin at the 9':33" marker) and we have another audio recording ready to use for Father's Day. Our ringers love to have the chance to ring. When all the ringers are gone, I spray the tables and pads lightly with Lysol Spray. No one touches another person's rehearsal music, books or gloves. If a ringer takes their book home to practice, it is their responsibility. It won't be touched by anyone else.



Iowa State Chair

Patrick Gagnon

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Western Representative

Yvonne Johnson

Eastern Representative

Cat Walker

Right now we need to find ways to stay safe, yet bring additional music into our worship services. Our church is NOT back to in-person services yet, but we are actively finding ways to include many different people from our congregation in our worship podcasts.”

Many thanks to Jan and her ringers for continuing to be a great leader in the Iowa Handbell community.

Future Events

Currently, we are hoping to host two ringing events this fall in Des Moines:

- *Beer, Wine, and Bells*, on Friday, October 9 at First Unitarian Church in Des Moines
- *2020 Mid Iowa Handbell Festival*, on Saturday, October 10. Both feature Brenda Austin as clinician and Des Moines Concert Handbells as hosts and participants. We will be watching closely as CDC Guidelines and best practices for safe gatherings are communicated in the coming months.



National Seminar

July 16-19, 2020

On-Line Attendance Option

If National Seminar has been too much of a stretch with your time and/or budget, the 2020 National Seminar is coming to you this year! All 19 classes will be available to registrants either by attendance or download. Area 8 is well-represented with instructors (Sharon Schmidt, KC Congdon, Beth Ann Edwards). Concerts will be presented each night on the HMA YouTube channel and Handbell Industry Council events will take place throughout the Seminar. The deadline for registering for the on-line option is July 15, and information can be found at <http://seminar.handbellmusicians.org/register/>

If you plan to attend National Seminar, please take notes on the event and share with the Area 8 leadership. We are eager to hear your thoughts on the success of the electronic version and how this format might be adapted for a future Area 8 event.



Kipp Willnauer

Kansas State Chair

Kipp Willnauer

Treasurer

Karla Denton

Secretary

OPEN - Contact:

Kipp Willnauer

Chimes

Shirley Myers

COVID-19 Reflections

By Kipp Willnauer, Kansas State Chair

We have encountered situations that we have never encountered before and have had to find creative ways to communicate, work and exercise. My wife has been very patient with me, very patient.

When Kansans received word that we must shut down all group activities and sequester ourselves in our home for 30 days or more, it seemed like all the lights were turned off. Worship services, choirs, ringers, even exercising activities at the YMCA were stopped. I wondered how I would keep a connection with it all. At first, I listened to other church musicians during the early weeks of March playing and singing hymns. I shared these songs with my singers, ringers, Pastor and church Secretary. Each week I explored YouTube selections that matched what the church musicians would have presented in the upcoming worship. Since I had the March through June selections already chosen, folks appreciated the completed songs. When the Pastor began to video tape an abbreviated worship, I contributed by adding the Prelude.

Grateful to still being paid my salary, I began to find ways to be at church and earn my keep. I continued to meet with the Pastor to plan the next worship service. I completed (my wife assisted) in filing away all music and storing all equipment properly. King of Kings Lutheran Church held Sunday drive through parades and Communion. I assisted in handing out Palm branches, Mother's Day flowers and US Flags on Memorial Day. Because of my upcoming retirement at the end of July, I began to communicate with the Worship chair regarding the 5 octaves of handbells, chimes and repairs needed, info regarding our Johannes organ and our Clavinova digital piano.

The water aerobics class, to which I went 5 days per week, recently decided to meet in the parking lot for our social time and gab session. We did weekly take out at local restaurants to support local businesses and talked to our daughter and grandchildren daily.

As Local Liaison for 2020 Area 8 Handbell Festival & Conference, I was attempting to locate 15 sets of handbells, 15 sets of handchimes, approximately 600 feet of cushions, 3 keyboards, 6 dollies, and 40 music stands. I had a choir member working on 20 table decorations, an ensemble lined up to give unloading and parking directions outside, and folks inside ready to welcome each of the 225+ registrants. The plan was good, except with COVID-19 many churches and directors were very reluctant to loan their music equipment. Then the Kansas Governor extended the state mandate longer, and the hotel and Area 8 could no longer think about hosting the 2020 Festival.

I know we were all saddened by this change of events. I miss ringers who have become good friends over the past 40+ years, yet we shall look to the future and conventions to come. For now, everyone stay healthy and safe.



Missouri State Chair

Cheri Leigh

PastChair

Suanne Comfort

Treasurer

Suanne Comfort

Membership

Sherry Boland

Chime Chair

Christie White

Ensemble Ringing with the Hymnal

By Cheri Leigh, Missouri Chair

When searching for music for a small group of ringers, such as a quartet, I have been tempted to just use music from the hymnal. After all, there are four parts and four ringers. What could be easier or cheaper? But hold on to your hymnal - it's not as easy as it sounds.

Range - The hymnal is meant for singing, so the range of the notes is limited to an occasional E6. This results in the loss of the upper bells, which give a bell choir its distinctive and beautiful sound. In addition, the lower bells may be too low and need to be written higher in the chord. To solve the range issue, one can transcribe the hymn to a better ringing range.

Middle Notes - The A4, B4, and C5 notes often jump around between the bass and treble clefs depending upon the singing line. This makes it more difficult to read those notes for the ringers. To solve this issue, the notes can be re-written into one clef.

Moving Notes - Moving lines are more interesting for singers, but do create a challenge for ringers who are weaving, especially if they are weaving eighth notes. And this is really more than a challenge for the lowest bells if every note is changing. One way to solve this is to change the alto, tenor, or bass notes into notes of longer value to support the chord.

If these issues are considered in the hymn selection, your troubles will be fewer and you will have hundreds of tunes at your fingertips. Use your imagination to make the selection more interesting with chimes or mallets or singing bells. The framework is there, just add some common sense and creativity.

The Raleigh Ringers

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Small Group Ringing

By Nancy Youngman, Nebraska Chair

As we're into our 4th month of the pandemic, the directors among us are probably losing sleep trying to figure out how to keep our handbell programs alive and vibrant. Many churches are still not open to the public, while others are with limitations firmly in place. In the meantime, we have to figure out how we can continue to keep bell music in our churches.

Of course, one of the biggest problems is the 6 foot rule. As most tables are 6 feet long, space becomes an issue. If tables must be used because of bell changes or a variety of instruments, ringers need to stand at each end to keep the distance. This will definitely increase the number of tables needed, and, as most churches were not built with the space needed for a bell choir in mind, this may not be an option.

Masks and gloves certainly should be worn, and washed after every rehearsal. Rehearsal spaces need to be large enough to accommodate the number of people in the choir and still allow for the space and ventilation issues. Temperatures should be taken at each rehearsal.

As I direct in two churches with different denominations, I need also to be aware of the limitations in each church. Thinking of the problems listed above, here is what I have come up with for the foreseeable future:

- 1 Small groups can use change ringing with a singer on the melody
- 2 There is a wonderful selection of music using 8 – 12 bells. Check these out!
- 3 We have 3 married couples in one of my bell choirs, so they don't have to go by the 6 foot rule. Each couple is preparing a duet that includes a flute or violin and piano. Again, there are a lot of these arrangements available.
- 4 I searched my library and found several 5 octave pieces with minimal accidentals. The two low bass ringers will have their own tables as usual, plus any accidentals assigned where it works the best. The rest of the ringers will have 2 bells (or 4 if playing 4 in hand) and a music stand. Most of these pieces are a level or two easier than we normally play, but we can still play as a complete choir.
- 5 We will rehearse in the parish hall so there is ample room to spread out.
- 6 It remains to be seen when the churches will reopen, but for now, we are taping our work, then they are edited into the services for viewing on Facebook and YouTube. This is actually somewhat of a blessing---we can tape until we get it right!

Here's hoping that these suggestions will only need to be used for a short period of time until we can return doing what we love the most!



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Upcoming A8 Events

July 2020

Thursday, July 16, 2020 - Monday, July 20, 2020

Handbell Musicians of America National Seminar: Orlando, FL (on-line)

October 2020

Friday, October 9, 2020

6:00 pm Beer, Wine, and Bells: Des Moines, IA

Saturday, October 10, 2020

8:00 am 2020 Mid-Iowa Handbell Festival: Windsor Heights, IA