

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHAWMUT
WORSHIP ARTS MINISTRY
January 2014

Statement of Purpose:

At First Baptist Church of Shawmut, we worship in obedience to God's Word and to edify the body of Christ. We worship God not only in our services, but also with our lives, so that "the words of our mouth and the meditations of our heart" are acceptable to the Lord (Psalm 19:14). Within each worship experience, our goal is to bring the congregation into the presence of God and to prepare hearts for the preaching of the Word of God, with the ultimate aim of changing lives into the image of Jesus Christ.

Why a new committee name?

This past year, we joined with the Audio Visual committee to create one committee called **Worship Arts**. Why? Because we recognize that there are many components that come together to create an excellent worship experience at First Baptist Church. There are singers, instrumentalists, sound engineers, and worship aids. Our large corporate worship experiences happen from the moment we enter the sanctuary until we leave. As a unified committee called "Worship Arts," our goal is to make the worship experience the best offering we can give to our Lord Jesus Christ.

But our committee also recognizes that worship experiences should not be constrained to this sanctuary. Rather, worship should happen every time the body of Christ meets: in Sunday school classes with children; in the Youth Shack with the youth; AS WELL AS in our regular adult meetings. Praising God and learning His Word are the two primary focuses of every meeting that occurs on this campus. Our committee is exploring how we can enhance the worship experiences for the entire body of Christ at First Baptist Church of Shawmut.

Last, we recognize that quality worship is part of the reputation of First Baptist Church of Shawmut. We have a rich tradition of excellent musical praise coming from this body, and that is something we certainly want to continue and to strengthen. We also recognize that our musical praise offerings are, in a sense, the "face of First Baptist Shawmut" to our community. We are an important part of the outreach ministry of our church. Thus, the new committee name of **Worship Arts** describes who we really are: a committee that intentionally strives to

provide worship experiences that are God-focused, excellent, diverse (both in terms of content and type), and inclusive of all ages.

So what have we done? Sometimes it's useful to look backwards and see what we have accomplished.

1. We began a children's choir, teaching young children not only how to sing, but how to participate in the worship experience in this body. We consider this ministry part of the church's mission to "equip the saints." Our children presented dramatic musicals and have participated in regular worship services. They are learning how to sing, yes. But more importantly, they are learning biblical truths and are becoming valuable contributors to our corporate worship experiences.
2. On several occasions, we included college student musicians in our services, reinforcing their sense of connection to this body and our sense of ministry to these temporary residents. For many local college students, First Baptist Church is their "home church" while away from home. By welcoming them and loving on them, you have participated in this ministry – and we say thanks.
3. Also on several occasions, we invited guest musicians to participate in our worship experiences: Tim Perryman and Brian Kempson were here probably the most, but also remember our guest violinist and cellist. We even had some bell-ringers! With their skill and talent, these musicians added beauty and diversity to our worship experiences, creating "special moments" to help usher us into the presence of God.
4. We celebrated our seasonal Christian holidays with special events. The Christmas cantata is probably what first comes to your mind. This musical event has a long tradition at First Baptist Church, and the event always brings a number of "first-timers" into this sanctuary to hear the message of the gospel presented in an excellent, compelling way. Did you know that the parents of this year's "baby Jesus" were part of this "first-time" crowd? They are a young couple we are still reaching out to – as are others who fall in this category – and the warmth of your welcome goes a long way to helping these folks decide whether or not attending church is something they should pursue. Again, thank you!

But there are other "special moments" in our year together: worship services throughout the Christmas season; special musical numbers for Memorial Day or Thanksgiving; Youth Sunday; special concerts with guest Christian artists. We want to see these moments enhanced, making

the totality of worship experiences at First Baptist Church of Shawmut pleasing to our Lord Jesus Christ.

What do we envision as our future?

Ultimately, as our mission statement suggests, we envision worship experiences for the First Baptist Shawmut body of Christ that are biblical, diverse, creative, appealing to all ages, evangelical, and attractive to a world lost and in need of Christ.

On a practical level, we envision having:

- * a comprehensive, graded choral program that provides musical training for all ages;
- * skilled instrumentalists on diverse instruments in every worship service;
- * multiple special programs that reach our community;
- * summer camps and other educational opportunities for intensive training for children and youth
- * musical praise happening in every setting, from Sunday Schools to mid-week services

So what do we hope to accomplish in the upcoming year?

We feel called to focus on three pressing needs at First Baptist:

- a) Reaching children and youth, and equipping them in how to worship. This involves not just experience, but also education and training.
- b) Reaching new young families, ushering them into the presence of God. This involves outreach.
- c) Providing quality worship experiences for every member of this body of Christ. This involves excellence, diversity, and creativity.

1. We will install the projector and screen, thus providing visual aids to the worship experiences at Shawmut. This will enhance all of our corporate worship experiences. We continue to raise money for the audio needs of our church campus, both the sanctuary and other venues.

2. We are working with Monroe to find ways to enhance worship experiences for our youth, from providing worship experiences in all youth meetings, to special events geared to our youth. We hope to increase youth participation in our corporate worship experiences.

3. We are exploring how we can enhance worship experiences for our children. We have begun children's choir, but what is happening in Sunday School, or on Wednesday nights? What more can we do to train our young people musically? Quality ministries for children are attractive

offerings for young families looking for a church. We know of no other children's choirs in our area – perhaps this is a ministry outlet to help us reach into our community.

4. We are exploring how we can continue to enhance our corporate worship experiences so that they are excellent, creative, diverse, and appealing to all ages. We want every member of the body, from young to old, to feel that they are a valuable part of this body. Also, Pastor Chuck has asked us to explore how we can provide even more special events or services that are open and appealing to our community.

Finally, we say thank you. Your unwavering support is important to us. We know that your investment in enhancing the worship experiences of this body -- of all ages -- is a tangible expression of your commitment to the scriptural mandate found in Psalm 81:

*Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob!
Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre.
Sound the ram's horn at the New Moon, and when the moon is full, on the day of our
Feast. This is a decree for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob.*

Time and again, our Lord commands that we worship. Let's do it with all of our heart, with all of our mind, and to the best of our ability!