

# **Developing and Maintaining Church Youth Choirs**

**Joe Nidever**  
**TCDA Convention 2019**  
**CC 221 - 2:00pm**

# Hello!



## **Joe Nidever**

Associate Music Director of Youth Choirs

Christ United Methodist Church

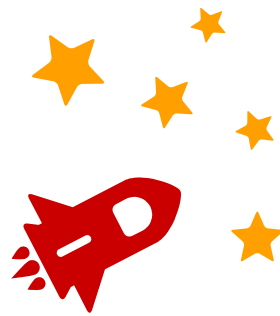
Plano, TX

# Resources

Youth Choir programs from  
around Texas.

# Overview

- Practices of strong Church youth choir programs in the state.
- Share ideas that work well in various settings.
- Focus on youth choir preservation, rejuvenation and growth.
- Repertoire considerations.



**1.**

# **Why Do Youth Choirs Matter?**

# Why Do Youth Choirs Matter?

- Engagement of the full body of the church in worship
- Continues the great practices that children's choirs begin
- Values the youth in traditional worship

# Hard Truth

- Difficult to find many programs around the state.
- Small choirs are common, but directors feel disconnected from each other.
- Visibility and awareness is rare.



2.

# Shared Challenges

Carry one another's burdens...



# Shared Challenges - Program

## Families are Busy

- Parents
- Kids
- School Events
- Club Events

**Middle Schoolers  
can't drive!**

## Communication

- Sharing Information
- Over-Saturation
- Quality & Quantity

## Staff Support

- Church Ecosystem
- Interdependence
- Visibility
- Support

# Shared Challenges - Music

## Ensemble Voicing

- Male Changing Voice
- SATB vs SAB vs SA

## Repertoire

- Meeting Vocal Needs
- Relevant Repertoire
- Theological Needs
- Creating Excitement for congregation and choir members

**3.**

# **General Suggestions/Ideas**

Solutions from around the state...



# Program - Families are Busy!

## Quality Time

- Ensure those kids who are present feel valued!
- Upperclassmen Leadership roles
- Know their stories!
- Try to talk to each kid as they walk into rehearsal.

## Value the Parents

- Thank the Parents. All. The. Time.
- Have a list of needs for the year and have parents claim them in Aug.
- Host a volunteer appreciation dinner.

# Program - Communication

- Technology Tools
  - Remind, Arena, Charms, Cut-Time, Constant Contact, Email Newsletters, Twitter, Facebook Groups
  - REAL pictures in common spaces at church!
- Target your communication types:
  - Is this information for parents or kids?
  - Do you have a safe way to communicate with your kids.

# Program - Staff Support

- Church Specific Niche
  - How can a youth choir augment this ministry?
  - How can this ministry be used to recruit kids?
- Weekly programming that feeds each other.
  - Same or similar time for events year upon year.
  - Elementary Choirs that meet concurrently, and a youth choir that meets immediately afterward.

# Program - Staff Support

- Ecosystem - What are the different ways that your choir can put ministry into action around your church and in your community?
  - Community Outreach Events/Ministry Concerts
  - Impromptu Concerts / Christmas Caroling to members of congregation that can't come to church any longer.
    - Pastoral Care Connection

# Music - Voicing

- Changing Voice Needs
  - Every boy is different and their vocal needs can vary a great deal. The most powerful tool is peer reinforcement.
  - Place them where their voice will work best, but keep them next to a boy.
  - Another boy who has been through the journey who affirms them is SOLID GOLD!
  - Ask a local Middle School teacher to give you tips or even invite them to lead a sectional!



# Music - Voicing

- SATB, SAB, SA, Oh My!
  - Choose music for the ensemble you have in front of you.
  - **Success begets Success.**
  - Never stop looking for repertoire.
    - Commission a living composer you love and the kids love to sing!
    - You many have congregation members who would be willing to donate.
  - Re-Arrange as needed.
  - Example: You can get clever with 2 pt music...
    - S/T and A/B in octaves
    - Make a verse into a duet for two fantastic singers
    - Keep the two-part and write a T or B part that fits your boys voices.
    - Sing a verse in unison and have an instrument play the other part.

# Music - Repertoire

- Personalize the experience. Write and Arrange Yourself!
  - Musescore 3.
    - Free. Learning curve, but not bad.
    - Community of music shared online.
    - Download and edit.
  - Magic phrase: “I wrote this for you.”
    - What it really means:
      - Parts they can sing, words that relate, ranges that fit, challenges they can achieve, and whole lot of:
        - “I care enough for you that I took the time to do this.”

4.

# Example Youth Choirs

Just a few... ;-)

# Misty Marshall Miller

## Stonebriar Community Church - Gloria Deo



### **Grades:**

7th-12th

### **Rehearsals:**

Wed 5-6pm

### **Performances:**

Mid-October

Christmas

Mid-February

May

### **Program Age:**

10 years

### **Directors/Staff:**

1 Director

Volunteer

Section Leaders

### **Primary Voicing:**

SATB

### **Membership:**

95-105 each  
week

### **Summer Events:**

None

### **Membership Info:**

- Large Homeschool population
- Many School Band members
- $\frac{1}{3}$  are not church members

# Misty Marshall Miller

## Stonebriar Community Church - Gloria Deo



### 10 Year Journey

12 members - Years 1-3

25 members - Year 4

45 members - Year 5

60 members - Years 6-7

100+ Years 8-10

### Tools for Success

Teach SR in rehearsal

Connect with kids

Quality repertoire

Voice Part Learning

Tracks

Build from the bottom up

Arms wide open!

# Misty Marshall Miller

## Stonebriar Community Church - Gloria Deo



### Plans for the Future

10 minute voice lessons  
with kids during  
rehearsals.

### Contact Info:

[mistym@stonebriar.org](mailto:mistym@stonebriar.org)



## Tim Morrison

### Custer Road UMC - Revelation Youth Choir

#### Performances:

8:30 Service  
Every Sunday  
Special Services

#### Program Age:

35 years

#### Directors/Staff:

1 Director

Parent Volunteer  
Section Leaders

#### Primary Voicing:

SATB

#### Membership:

70 - 75 typical Sun  
150 Total

#### Summer Events:

3 Tours:  
MS  
HS  
College Alumni

#### Membership Info:

- ~25 are in school choir
- Many School Band members

#### Grades:

6th-12th

#### Rehearsals:

Sunday  
MS 5-6pm  
HS 6-7pm



## **Tim Morrison**

### **Custer Road UMC - Revelation Youth Choir**

#### **Recruitment**

Reward those who bring  
Friends. Free T-Shirt!

“Culture of Invitation”  
Celebrate new members

Director focuses on big  
picture community and  
students keep each other

#### **Tools for Success**

#1 Priority: Faith

Don't be “another”  
ensemble.

Look up scripture in every  
rehearsal!

Share your passion!

We corner the market!





## **Tim Morrison**

### **Custer Road UMC - Revelation Youth Choir**

#### **Plans for the Future**

Figure out how to to  
keep HS kids connected  
as they move on to  
college.

Go way contemporary!  
Kirk Franklin  
Israel Houghton

#### **Contact Info:**

[tmorrison@crumc.org](mailto:tmorrison@crumc.org)

(C) 972-489-2286



# Gay Munselle

## Highland Park Presbyterian Church

### Genesis Youth Choir

#### **Performances:**

One service per  
month  
Christmas Eve

#### **Program Age:**

40+ years

#### **Directors/Staff:**

1 Director

Volunteer Section  
Leaders

#### **Primary Voicing:**

SATB

#### **Membership:**

20 typical Sun  
30 Total

#### **Summer Events:**

6 Day  
Summer  
Mission Trip

½ Day projects and  
concerts

#### **Membership Info:**

- ~8 are in school choir
- School Orchestra and Band members
- Members from all over DFW
- Small Youth Group

#### **Grades:**

7th-12th

#### **Rehearsals:**

Sunday  
4:45-6pm



# Gay Munselle

## Highland Park Presbyterian Church

### Genesis Youth Choir

#### Team-Building

10 minutes of  
team-building activities  
during every rehearsal

Members need to know  
each other in order to  
trust each other.

#### Tools for Success

Stay on the schedule.

Always show that your  
choir is active.

Mission Trip - Helps with  
connection to  
congregation.



# **Gay Munselle**

## **Highland Park Presbyterian Church**

### **Genesis Youth Choir**

#### **Plans for the Future**

Get more students involved and have a larger core group that helps recruit and lead.

#### **Contact Info:**

[gay.munselle@hppres.org](mailto:gay.munselle@hppres.org)

214-525-4202

# Joe Nidever & Jillian Nidever

## Christ UMC Plano

### Living Proof Youth Choir



#### **Grades:**

6th-12th

#### **Rehearsals:**

Sunday  
All 4-5pm  
Extra  
5-5:30pm

#### **Performances:**

8:45 Service  
Every Sunday  
Special Services  
Broadway Cafe

#### **Program Age:**

30+

#### **Directors/Staff:**

2 Directors

Music Admin  
Assistant

#### **Primary Voicing:** SATB

#### **Membership:**

40 typical Sun  
80 Total

#### **Summer Events:**

2 Tours:  
MS - In State  
HS - Out of State

#### **Membership Info:**

- 1/3 are in school choir
- School Orchestra and Band members
- Strong Plano Music Teaching in Schools
- Seasonal Membership

# Joe Nidever & Jillian Nidever

## Christ UMC Plano

### Living Proof Youth Choir



#### Year End Focused Goals

Each element of the choir year leads to the next.

Fall Kickoff

Christmas

January Fundraiser

Concert “Broadway Cafe”

Easter

Choir Tours

#### Tools for Success

Momentum all year long

Student Leadership and goals for HS Seniors

Intentional Tone-Building time in warmups

Small Group

Opportunities

# Joe Nidever & Jillian Nidever

## Christ UMC Plano

### Living Proof Youth Choir



#### Plans for the Future

Establish leadership  
from 8th graders and  
roles for juniors as well

Keep writing/arranging  
music for ensemble.

Goal: 1 piece each  
semester and tour  
season.

#### Contact Info:

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(C) 832-607-0243

# What's their “Why”?

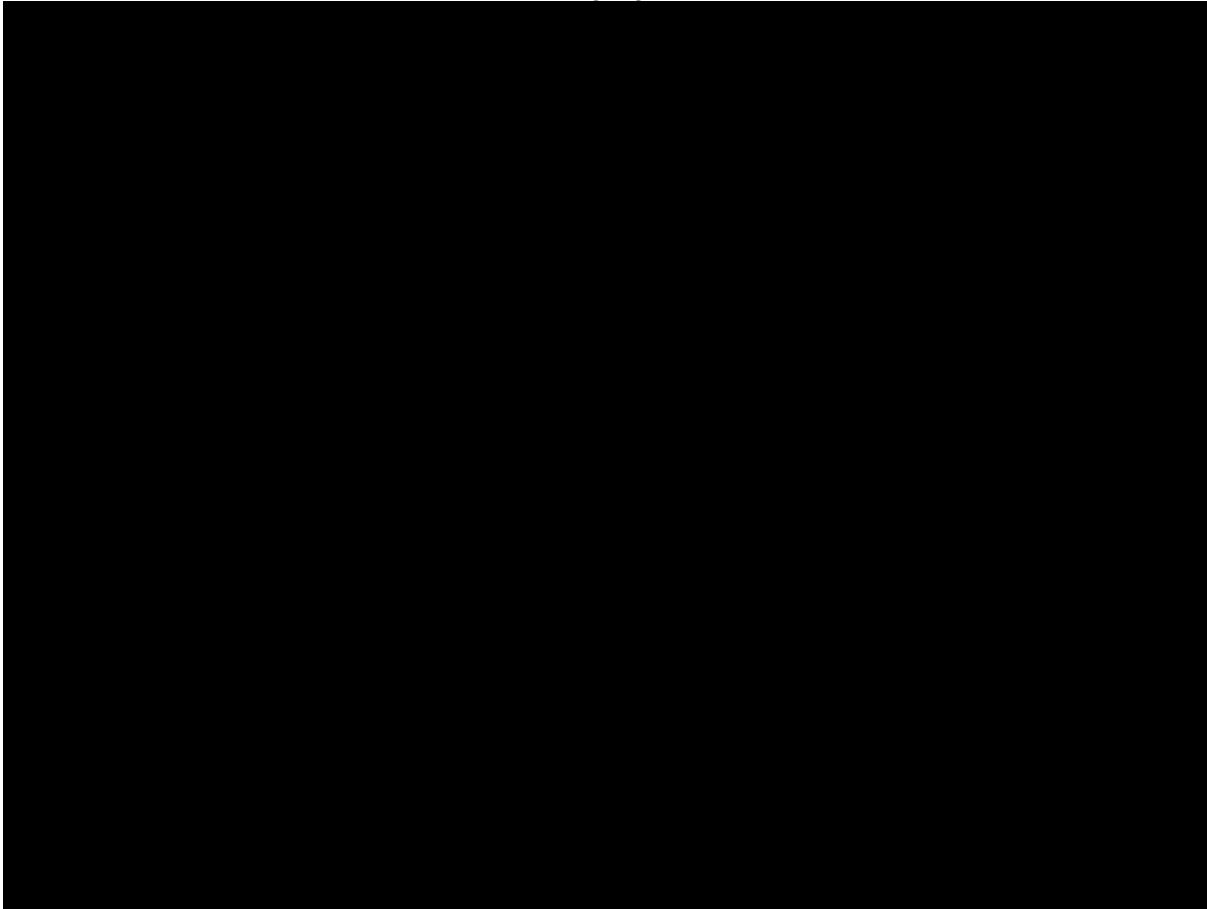
- What is their **message** that the members can share others?
- What is a **goal** that they can connect to?
- What is their **purpose** as a ministry team that can motivate them?







# HS Summer Tour 2019



# Thanks!

## Any questions?

You can find me at:

- [nidever.joe@gmail.com](mailto:nidever.joe@gmail.com)
- 832-607-0243