

WELS HANDBELL FESTIVALS

Bylaws

ARTICLE I. – NAME

The name of this organization is WELS Handbell Festivals (WHF) of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

ARTICLE II. – MISSION STATEMENT

- A. WHF is organized to worship the Lord through the medium of handbells. Festivals allow ringers and directors to experience a special bond of Christian fellowship.
- B. Secondary goals of WHF are to assist participants in skills needed for handbell ringing, to give directors and choir members opportunities to explore music, to discuss challenges associated with handbell ringing, and to spark enthusiasm for the joy of handbell ringing.
- C. Our motto is, "We gather to give our best to the Lord of our salvation and to his assembled saints."

ARTICLE III. – PARTICIPATION AND REGIONS

- A. Participation in WHF is open to all WELS congregations and schools who have handbell choirs. Congregations and schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) are also invited to participate.
- B. Congregations and schools in WELS and ELS who have handbell choirs are divided into three regions.
 - 1. Western Region includes those west of Mississippi River and those in Wisconsin located near Mississippi River.
 - 2. Northeast Region includes those in Northern Wisconsin District of WELS and those in northern parts of Western and Southeastern Wisconsin Districts.
 - 3. Southeast Region includes those in southern parts of Western and Southeastern Wisconsin Districts, Illinois and Michigan.
- C. Congregations and schools are encouraged to attend festivals in the region to which they have been assigned. A congregation may request participation in a festival outside its region. Acceptance is based on remaining space after regional congregations are registered.

ARTICLE IV. – REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FESTIVALS

- A. Handbell festivals are two-day events held on a Saturday and Sunday in the spring months. Saturday is a day of rehearsing. A festival concert is rung on Sunday afternoon.
- B. Handbell festivals are held in three-year cycles. In two consecutive years regional festivals are held. In the third year a national festival is held. National festivals rotate among the three regions.
- C. In years 2018 through 2026 the following schedule will be used:

2018 & 2019	Regional festivals
2020	CANCELLED due to COVID-19
2021	National festival in Southeast Region
2022 & 2023	Regional festivals
2024	National festival in Western Region
2025 & 2026	Regional festivals
2027	National festival in Northeast Region
2028 & 2029	Regional festivals
2030	National festival in Southeast Region
- D. A region may choose not to hold a festival for one year, but not for two consecutive years.

ARTICLE V. – WELS HANDBELL FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

- A. A WHF committee of four oversees organization and details of holding festivals. These four are one national chair and three regional representatives, one representative from each of the three regions.
- B. Duties of the WHF committee are:
 - 1. To confirm sites and dates for handbell festivals;
 - 2. To appoint annually a music selection committee;
 - 3. To review and approve or make suggestions for change in music selection committee’s choices;
 - 4. To confirm site coordinators for national festivals;
 - 5. To establish choir registration fees and participant fees;
 - 6. To choose directors for national festivals;
 - 7. To arrange for directors’ meetings at national festivals;
 - 8. To provide festival logo and to assist with publicity material for each festival;
 - 9. To encourage musical growth of directors and ringers;
 - 10. To prepare slate of candidates for national chair;
 - 11. To appoint ballot committee for election of national chair;
 - 12. To appoint annually an auditing committee not members of WHF committee congregations;
 - 13. To appoint bylaws committee.
 - 14. To fill vacancies in office. (Appointments may be pro tem [for the time being], or, in the case of resignation, for the remainder of the term.);
 - 15. To attend to all other matters related to WHF.

ARTICLE VI. – NATIONAL CHAIR ELECTION

- A. A national chair is elected in the year that national festivals are held. Candidates for this office must have three years of ringing and/or directing experience within the last five years. They are to have participated in two handbell festivals.
 - 1. Term of office for national chair is three years. Length of service is limited to two consecutive terms or six years.
 - 2. After serving six years, this person is not eligible to serve in this office for six years.
- B. Nominations for national chair may be made by directors and ringers who have participated in past festivals. Consent of the nominee must be obtained before it appears on ballot.
- C. Ballots are sent via mail or e-mail to congregations who have registered for national festival and to congregations who have participated in one regional festival during previous two years. A ballot committee counts ballots and announces results at directors' meeting. Candidate having greatest number of votes is elected.

ARTICLE VII. – REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

- A. Each region chooses one representative to serve on WHF committee. Candidates for this office need to have two years of ringing or directing experience and have participated in two handbell festivals.
 - 1. Term of office for regional representative is three years. Length of service for office is limited to two consecutive terms or six years.
 - 2. After serving six years, this person is not eligible to serve in this position for six years.
- B. Northeast Region chooses its representative in first year following national festival. Southeast and Western Regions choose their representatives in second year following national festival.

ARTICLE VIII. – DUTIES OF WELS HANDBELL FESTIVALS COMMITTEE

A. Duties of national chair are:

1. To chair meetings of WHF committee and directors' meetings at national festivals;
2. To appoint annually one regional representative to serve as secretary;
3. To appoint annually a treasurer who may be a regional representative or member at large (One person may serve no longer than six consecutive years as treasurer.);
4. To communicate with congregations concerning festivals;
5. To communicate annually with congregations reports by treasurer and auditing committee;
6. To maintain current list of WELS and ELS congregations and schools with handbells, including mailing addresses and e-mail addresses;
7. To receive and store secretaries' and treasurers' files;
8. To oversee and update website of WHF;
9. To share information with regional representatives;
10. To submit announcements to *Forward in Christ*;
11. To submit information about WHF, including music selected for festivals, to WELS Commission on Worship;
12. To oversee all other matters relating to WHF.

B. Duties of regional representatives are:

1. To attend meetings of WHF committee;
2. To oversee regional festivals, advising site coordinators;
3. To choose festival directors for regional festivals;
4. To arrange for and chair directors' meetings at regional festivals;
5. To appoint secretary for regional directors' meetings and forward minutes to national secretary;
6. To encourage festival participation within region;
7. To guide and advise handbell directors on regional level;
8. To keep national chair informed about regional festivals;
9. To collect offerings received at regional festivals and remit promptly to treasurer;
10. To maintain accurate accounting records with site coordinator;
11. To request from treasurer, together with site coordinator, funds to pay for regional festival expenses.

C. Duties of secretary are:

1. To attend and keep minutes of all WFH committee meetings;
2. To attend and keep minutes of directors' meetings at national festivals;
3. To receive minutes from regional directors' meetings and forward to WHF file held by national chair;
4. To serve as treasurer pro tem.

D. Duties of treasurer are:

1. To attend meetings of WHF committee as a non-voting participant unless also serving as regional representative or secretary;
2. To manage WHF funds. (Banking is done with bank chosen by treasurer and approved by the WHF committee.);
3. To receive registration fees and forms, sharing registration information with WHF committee and site coordinators;
4. To be responsible for accounting of WHF financial records, submitting written reports at meetings of WHF committee;
5. To preserve and make available to auditing committee all checks, receipts, invoices, and statements;
6. To make payment of pre-approved bills and submit all other bills to WHF for approval;
7. To receive offerings at national festivals.

ARTICLE IX. – SITE COORDINATORS

- A. One or two persons serve as site coordinator(s) at each regional and national festival.
- B. Duties of site coordinators are:
 1. To work with WHF committee and/or regional representative to plan festival;
 2. To suggest date and site for festival;
 3. To arrange meals and snacks for festival;
 4. To arrange for devotion and worship leaders at festival;
 5. To promote festivals through local publicity such as bulletin inserts, posters, news releases;
 6. To prepare and print programs for festival concert;
 7. To prepare facility for festival, arranging tables, chairs, microphones and any other items required;
 8. To work with regional representative to select instrumentalists and vocal choirs;
 9. To determine maximum number of choirs that site allows;
 10. To provide travel and lodging information to webmaster and participating choirs;
 11. To request funds from treasurer to pay printing, publicity, gratuities, food, equipment, and facility rentals costs (Accurate accounting of these costs must be maintained and turned over to treasurer.);
 12. More detailed duties are listed on www.welsbells.com/document download.

ARTICLE X. – DIRECTORS' MEETINGS

- A. Directors' meetings during which WHF business is conducted are held at each national and regional festival. Regional representatives are chosen at designated times as outlined in Article VII. B.
- B. Directors attending properly announced meetings constitute a quorum.
- C. Directors' meetings allow opportunity for directors to make suggestions and voice concerns to WHF.

- D. Each participating choir's director may attend directors' meeting. If a director does not attend, a ringer may represent that congregation.

ARTICLE XI. – COMMITTEES

A. Music Selection Committee

1. Number of persons serving on music selection committee is determined by the WHF committee and is to be representative of all regions.
2. Duties of music selection committee are:
 - a. To select music for mass choirs and sectional choirs as assigned by WHF committee;
 - b. To develop festival theme;
 - c. To select music that reflects doctrinal purity upheld by WELS, is in good musical taste, and will be useful to handbell choirs throughout the year;
 - d. To recommend use of instrumentalists and vocal choirs in selected music.
 - e. To submit theme and selections to WHF committee;
3. Music selection committee receives changes suggested by the WHF committee and makes final decisions on theme and music.
4. Identical music is rung at each regional festival.

B. Auditing Committee

1. The Auditing committee reviews the treasurer's financial records and makes a written report of findings to the WHF committee.
2. Audit is completed by October 1 of each year.

C. Bylaws Committee

1. Bylaws committee is appointed every three years, or more frequently, if deemed necessary by the WHF committee.
2. Bylaws committee reviews WHF bylaws and makes recommendations.

ARTICLE XII. – REPEAL AND AMENDMENT

- A. Bylaws may be repealed or amended at any directors' meeting, provided that a written copy of proposed change is given to all directors in advance of the meeting.
- B. In years of national festivals, bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority of voting members attending directors' meeting.
- C. In years of regional festivals, votes are taken at each festival. The numerical record of vote is reported to the national chair. Chair totals votes. Two-thirds majority of all regions' votes is necessary to repeal or amend.

ARTICLE XIII. – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised is authority for parliamentary procedure. Meetings are conducted according to good Christian order.

ARTICLE XIV. – DISSOLUTION

Should dissolution of this organization occur, which God may graciously prevent, all property and financial assets revert to WELS.

Bylaws recommended for adoption on March 25, 2013.
Updated April 30, 2016, May 7, 2020.