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July 6, 2008

Dear Handbell Directors,

You and your ringers are invited to participate in the 30th annual WELS Handbell Festival. This year there will be three regional festivals. The festivals include Saturday as a day of rehearsing and a festival concert on Sunday at 2:00 P.M.

Northeast Region: April 18-19, 2009

Site: Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, WI

Site Coordinators: Ruth Koepsell, Pam Zuberbier and Judy Lauber

Southeast Region: April 25-26, 2009

Site: Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, WI

Site Coordinator: Diane Karrow

Western Region: April 18-19, 2009

Site: St. Croix Lutheran High School, West St. Paul, MN

Site Coordinator: Lori Milewski

The Music Selection Committee for the WELS Handbell Festivals has met and has selected music for the 2009 regional festivals. Jennifer Jewell, Salem, Stillwater, MN; Carol Lince, Trinity, Waukesha, WI; Debi Traeder, St. Peter, Schofield, WI, and I attended the Music Selection Committee meeting. "Hail Thee, Festival Day" was chosen as the theme for the 2009 regional festivals. In choosing the music we tried to respond to comments that were offered during the directors' meetings. The music spans the church year. Some include organ, instrumental parts, hand chimes and vocal choir. In response to the increasing cost of music, five repeats were chosen. We also choose a number of pieces that have 2-3 octave and 3-5 octave compatible editions. You will find the music list on the website, www.wellsbells.com.

If you are new to festivals, do not let the long list of music discourage you. Your first step should be to choose which choir—Laudate or Exaltate—is best for your choir. Laudate music is somewhat easier. Exaltate music is more challenging. If you direct a beginning choir, or are participating in a handbell festival for the first time, the Laudate Choir music is recommended. Learn all four pieces assigned to the choir you choose. Then learn as many of the mass numbers that your choir can handle. You do not have to learn all of the mass numbers. Limit yourself to those that you can prepare well. Some churches bring two or three choirs to festival and they divided the music between the choirs. If you have only one choir you are welcome to ring all 14 pieces, but it is not required.

Northeast Region	Southeast Region	Western Region	Treasurer
Ruth Koepsell	Trevor Wolter	Brian Schwanz	Gwen Tjernagel
35 E. 2 nd St.	109 E. Monroe Ave. #7	1029 N. Park St.	620 Page Avenue
Fond du Lac, WI. 54935	Hartford, WI. 53027	Watertown, SD. 57201	North Mankato, MN 56003
(920) 924-0215	(414) 736-0501	(605) 884-1012	(507) 387-1501
drkoepsell@sbcglobal.net	trevorwolter@hotmail.com	watermusik@hotmail.com	gwen@gtbugs.com

You may obtain your music from several sources:

*Northwestern Publishing House: Use a NPH order blank or call 1-800-662-6022. Indicate you are ordering festival music.

*Norman Heitz, 1-800-DO-MI-Sol and 1-877-426-3235; normheitz@usfamily.net

*Jeffers Handbell Supply, 1-800-JHS-BELL, www.handbellworld.com

*Wisconsin National Music Sales, 1-414-327-7336

All of the above have been supplied with a list of our festival music. Several of these businesses have discount policies. If you would like to see a copy before you purchase, several businesses will send out one copy on approval. Please ask your supplier.

On the music list you will find a source to use to hear the piece. If you do not have the CD many of the pieces may be found at www.handbellworld.com if you would like to listen to them before you buy them. Directors' notes and hotel information will be placed on our website, www.welsbells.com as soon as they are available. Schedules, maps, posters, etc. will also be placed there when available.

On the website you will now find the music list, preliminary registration form and director information forms. If you are interested in directing at this year's festival please return the form to me by September 15. If you are not interested in directing please complete the preliminary registration form and return it to me by **OCTOBER 15**. This will not commit you to festival participation, but will give us an idea of how many will likely be attending. **Please return this form whether or not you are planning to participate. IF YOU DO NOT RETURN THIS FORM YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE 2009 FESTIVAL.** No fees need to be sent with this form. We will use the information on the form to update our mailing lists and files.

We are asking each choir to bring a banner to the festival site. This tradition has been very well received at each festival. The banner should measure five feet by three feet and be attached to a six foot pole, placed in a standard. You will need to provide the pole and standard. Most banners include the church/school name and location. This is not a requirement. If you do not have a banner, please do not let that be the deciding factor in attending a festival.

Please help us maintain a complete list of WELS and ELS congregations and schools with handbells. If you know of any congregation or school that you think is not on our mailing list, or hear of a congregation acquiring bells, please pass that information to me.

Festival Business

On Saturday, June 28, two of the area representatives, Gwen Tjernagel (our treasurer) and I met to discuss and plan for the festivals. You will find the representatives' contact information on the front page. Gwen Tjernagel has agreed to serve another year as our treasurer. Trevor Wolter will serve as the secretary.

499 ringers participated in the 2008 national festival. I would like to commend you and your ringers on how well prepared you were. This makes rehearsals run very smoothly.

Fees for the 2009 regional festivals will remain the same as last year.

Registration Fee: \$35 for the first choir, \$50 for two choirs and \$65 for three choirs.
It will be refunded only if the entire choir withdraws from the festival by February 15.

“Orphan Ringers”: If you have 5 or fewer ringers who would like to come to the festival and be “adopted” by another choir the fee for each of those ringers is \$5. They will also pay the participant fee.

Participant Fee: \$8.50 per participant—ringers and directors. It is non-refundable.
This will be due March 15.
*If the registration is postmarked after this date a \$20.00 late fee will be added.
Our site coordinators need time to plan accordingly with the number of participants expected.*

In December you will find the final registration forms on the website. I will not be mailing them out this year unless I do not have an email address for you. Some directors have used a church secretary email address as a way of receiving emails from me. Please choose the address that works best for you. Please print clearly when writing your email address on the form.

If you have any questions or concerns about the 2009 festivals you may contact me, your regional representative or the site coordinator, whomever you think could best answer your question.

If you have never joined us at a handbell festival, we urge you to join us this year. If it has been some years since you’ve rung at a WELS Handbell Festival, ring with us again this year. The ringers and directors experience a special bond of Christian fellowship through working together at a festival. Festivals also give ringers and directors an opportunity to discuss music and problems associated with bell ringing. Our motto is “We gather together to give our best to the Lord of our salvation and to his assembled saints.”

Yours in Christ,

Kim M. Pilz
WELS National Chairperson