Praise the Lord!
Praise him with a blast of the trumpet;
Praise him with the lyre and harp!
Praise him with the tambourine and dancing;
Praise him with stringed instruments and flutes!
Praise him with a clash of cymbals;
Praise him with loud clanging cymbals.
Let everything that lives sing praises to the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

- Psalm 150: 1, 3-6
A Note from Phillip

I am excited about your interest in the Praise Team Ministry of FBCMJ. Praise Team consists of singers who are also part of Praise Choir and all of our instrumentalists.

Ministry is a real blessing here at FBCMJ. The attitudes of our congregation and the atmosphere of our worship services are positive, encouraging, and victorious!

In today's culture, we must work hard to protect the integrity of Christ's image in our personal lives as well as the church. Our church and our community are growing steadily, and we must be prepared to evangelize, disciple, and put to service the people God entrusts to our care.

As you read this handbook, know that its purpose is not to try to make your life more difficult. On the contrary, its purpose is:

To organize and prepare the Praise Team Ministry to be more diverse and accessible in participation while developing and upholding a standard of spiritual excellence and musical integrity.

In other words, we want as many people as God calls to experience the blessings of using their talents and gifts for His glory. Yes, it is time intensive, and yes, we are setting the bar high. I know without a doubt FBCMJ-ers are more than capable to rise to this occasion.

So pray, ask God to open your heart and mind, then start reading. Pay close attention to the scripture references cited. We are not just pulling this stuff out of the air. These are biblical concepts put to practical use.

I look forward to ministering with you, however God leads, and together experiencing the rich blessings of our very faithful Father.

Blessings,
Phillip Brunner
Worship Pastor
PURPOSES

Why do we exist as a church?

We exist to Glorify God by Making Followers of Jesus who Love God, Love People, and Go into the World.

We will achieve our purpose by becoming:
1. Worship-ers
2. Pray-ers
3. Giv-ers
4. Learn-ers
5. Serv-ers
6. Relat-ers
7. Reproduc-ers

Why do we worship?

Offering ourselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2), we worship together:
- To HONOR (Psalm 29:1-2) and PRAISE (Psalm 149, 150) God the Father,
- To REMEMBER (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) and CELEBRATE (Revelation 5) the work of Jesus the Christ, and
- To INVOKE (John 4:24, 1 Thessalonians 5:19) and SUBMIT (Ephesians 5:18-20) to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Why do we exist as Worship Leaders?

1. To Exalt God (Psalm 107:32) and lead our congregation to join with us (Psalm 99:5, 9)
2. To Edify (build up) the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:26)
3. To Evangelize the lost as they witness our worship (Acts 2:42-47)
EXPECTATIONS

• **To attend called rehearsals when one is scheduled to lead worship.** Worship schedules are constructed based upon your availability being communicated to the worship pastor. Flexibility in scheduling is a cornerstone of a healthy ministry. Generally, rehearsals include one mid-week and one early Sunday morning. Occasionally, there are special called rehearsals for special worship events. *(For vocalists, faithful attendance in Praise Choir is also required.)*

• **To build one another up in speech, attitude, and action.** A group cannot lead worship together if members of the group do not support one another. *(1 Thess. 5:11, Eph. 4:1-6)* Be quick to praise, slow to critique, and open to other’s suggestions.

• **To support FBCMJ in speech, attitude, and action.** As a worship leader, negative speech, attitudes, and actions damage the worship of God, the Bride of Christ (the church), other individuals, and oneself. *(Phil. 2:14-15)*

• **To pray on a continual basis for God's direction and blessings on FBCMJ, its ministries including worship ministries, and fellow servant worship leaders.** *(1 Thess. 5:17)*

• **To grow in one's personal relationship with God, including personal worship.** One cannot lead others into worship if one does not practice personal daily worship. Your time with the Lord on Monday is equally as important as on Sunday. *(Romans 12:1-2)*

• **To lead a lifestyle that is consistent with the teachings of scripture.** Living a life that is explicitly outside of God's will makes it impossible for one to lead others in worship. *(Nehemiah 10:28-29)*

• **To pursue excellence in leading worship.** Seek to always improve in one’s skills. God is an excellent God, and our worship must be the best offering we can give to God for He is not pleased with second best. *(Malachi 1 & 3)* We must “run in such a way as to get the prize.” The prize is not perfection but bringing honor to our great God! *(1 Corinthians 9:24-27)*

• **To worship God in spirit and in truth.** “In Spirit” - Remember it is by the power and leading of the Holy Spirit that worship from our heart will be free, anointed, acceptable, and life-changing. “In Truth” - Remember God's Word does not change, and as we lead, we must have committed His truth to memory and applied it to our lives. *(1 Corinthians 2:4, John 4:23)*

• **To resolve relational conflict according to Matthew 18:15-20.**

• **To dress appropriately to lead worship so as not to draw attention to self but to glorify God.** We are above the eye level of the congregation in full view of people and cameras. Ladies, please no low cuts,
spaghetti straps, short dresses, or excessively flashy jewelry. Gentlemen, please no shorts. For everyone, please no exposure of midriffs, undergarments, etc., no excessively tight clothing, and no torn clothing that causes distraction. (Psalm 34:3)

- **To always be patient.** (Proverbs 15:18, 1 Thess. 5:14)
- **To follow rehearsal etiquette.** Be on time, ready for all rehearsals and worship leading opportunities. (Come early enough to set up your equipment and be ready.) Use your talents to the best of your ability, worshipping with your entire being (yes, this means heart, soul, mind, hands, feet, face – inside and out). Concentrate on all activities, not just those involving you. Be polite and please be courteous when others are rehearsing. This means to not play one's instrument or be talking loudly when others are rehearsing. When the music stops, please wait for instruction. Positive comments are welcome during rehearsal. Problems should be discussed with the worship leader privately.

In the event that an individual does not meet the above expectations, they will be notified and encouraged to begin meeting expectations. If one consistently falls below the expectations, he/she will be taken off regular rotation and placed on a substitute list. If improvement is made, they will have the opportunity (not automatic) to be placed back in rotation.

We must be dedicated, prepared, orderly, and skilled students of our artistic craft, continually striving to improve. (Colossians 3:23 “Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.”) This can mean a great deal of individual practice as well as with the team. The team will only be as proficient as the individuals that make it up.
QUALIFICATIONS

1. A professing and practicing follower of Christ. You must be a faithful participant in the life of this congregation as demonstrated by your attendance and involvement (regularly attending worship services and involved in small group community).

2. Vocalists must be a member of the Praise Choir for at least one season (fall or spring) and maintain the minimum choir attendance requirements.

3. Spiritual Maturity – You must have the ability to cooperate with others, to serve for the greater good of our church, to be sensitive to the will of God, and be supportive of FBCMJ leadership and vision. This means a willingness to hold this ministry with an “open hand,” leaving up to the Lord and FBCMJ leadership decisions regarding the scope of your involvement.

4. Music/Technical Expertise – instrumentalists and vocalists need to be skilled enough to follow a service which is led by the Spirit of God. We don't want to limit what God will do simply because we can't handle it musically.

Vocalists must be able to:

• Perform well with others
• Learn new material quickly
• Demonstrate suitable range and accurate pitch
• Sing from sheet music, chord sheets, and/or by ear
• Distinguish and sing different musical styles
• Sing straight tone and vibrato
• Hear and adjust your voice to blend with others

Instrumentalists must be able to:

• Perform well with others
• Learn new material quickly
• Demonstrate suitable ability on an instrument
• Play from sheet music, chord sheets, and/or by ear
VOCAL AUDITION EVALUATION

**Accurate Pitch** – Speaks to the ability to learn and sing the accurate notes at the appropriate times. It means listening to yourself, the other singers, and the instruments, and self-correcting any sharp or flat tendencies in a particular song. It also speaks to your use of vibrato, which itself is a variation of pitch.

**Rhythmic Precision** – Speaks to your ability to sing phrases correctly as they are rhythmically notated and intended. Are you dragging? Are you cutting off too early or holding on too late?

**Appropriate Tone** – Speaks to the quality of your vocal tone with which you sing in particular sections of songs. Is it appropriate for the song? Should it be strong? Should it be tender? Should it be loose? Should it be precise?

**Blend** – Speaks to the mixing of your voice with the other singers. Are you listening to the other singers? Does your voice stick out? Is it too loud? Are you singing too softly?

**Encouraging Presentation** – Speaks to how you appear as a lead worshipper. Are you connecting with the congregation through eye contact and facial expression? Do you encourage clapping or other outward forms of worship? Do you have a stoic expression with your eyes glued to the back monitor? Are you real or overly rehearsed?

**Music Style** – Speaks to the exposure, understanding, and experience with different musical styles, especially today's praise and worship genre. Do you have the ability to express that style with your voice?

**Ear** – Speaks to the ability to hear and respond to vocal strengths and weaknesses. Can you self-correct? Are you able to ad lib or sing in harmony? Can you tell when you are succeeding or failing at these areas?
INSTRUMENTAL AUDITION EVALUATION

**Music Reading** – Speaks to your ability to read lead sheets, chord sheets, instrumental parts, etc. Can you read and follow notes on a staff? For rhythm section instruments, can you read and follow chord charts if necessary? Can you follow lead sheets with chords and a vocal line only?

**Rhythmic Precision** – Speaks to the ability to play accurate rhythms in a precise manner with the other players and singers as the song dictates. Can you keep in time?

**Musicality** – Speaks to the accuracy and exposure of certain rhythms, chord structures, and moods of certain song styles. Does the instrumentation fight or enhance other aspects of the worship presentation? Is it in sync with and is it sensitive to the other players and singers?

**Music Style** – Speaks to the exposure, understanding, and experience with different musical styles, especially today's praise and worship genre. Do you have the ability to express that style with your instrument?
HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER OF THE FBCMJ PRAISE TEAM?

1. Prayerfully consider if this is what God is calling you to do: Do you feel that you can commit to the time involvement? Do you have your family's support? Do you believe this is something God is calling you to do? If so...

2. Complete the Audition Questionnaire at the end of this packet; return it to the FBCMJ Worship Ministry office. You will be contacted to schedule a time for your interview and audition.

3. Interview and Audition:
   - Prepare one song of religious nature that highlights your abilities including range, rhythm, style, etc. (by memory if you are a vocalist, contact Phillip for suggestions or help). You may use an accompaniment track if needed, bring an accompanist with you, or pre-arrange to have someone from here at the church accompany you. A cappella is preferred if possible.
   - Be prepared to sight read a simple, new song (You may listen to it played once for you if necessary).
   - Vocalists, please be prepared to vocalize to demonstrate your vocal range AND to sing a harmony line we will play for you.
   - Prepare your heart for a brief interview time after the audition by spending time with the enclosed “Interview Considerations.”

4. Notification: You will be notified of your audition result in writing. Whether you are asked to join the praise team or not, if you would like feedback from your audition, I would be happy to give you an honest critique. I will expect you to ask me though. I will not mention anything unless you want to hear it.
INTERVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

These are not interview questions, only some things to ask yourself for personal evaluation prior to the interview.

Are you faithful?
Think about your exposure, understanding, and devotion to the Worship Ministry purpose, vision, and values. Is worship evident throughout the week in the form of prayer, devotions, and accountability in your own life? What do you watch on TV throughout the week, what websites do you frequent, what do you do for fun? Would anything change if Jesus was physically walking with you for a week?

Are you available?
Can you commit the time? Can you be prompt? Can you be prepared?

Are you teachable?
There are two aspects which readily reveal heart attitude.
1) Are you open to new ideas and teaching (regarding vocal or instrumental playing skills)?
2) If asked, how easily would you receive a suggestion for additional training? Are you willing to take ideas and suggestions from a vocalist or instrumentalist within the ministry? Outside the ministry? Keep in mind that the spiritual aspect of this ministry far outweighs talent or ability.
AUDITION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please return to Phillip Brunner in order to have an interview time scheduled. You may write on this paper, send responses via email, or type on another sheet.

NAME: _____________________________________

1. What is your music background and experience? (choirs, bands, soloing, etc.)

2. Please share any experience leading groups of people vocally, instrumentally, or otherwise?

3. Do you read music? If yes, how did you learn to read?

4. In your own words, what is the role of a worship leader?

5. Why do you feel called to be a worship leader?

6. In what other ministries or areas are you involved at FBCMJ?

7. Describe a time when you have “tasted of God’s goodness.”

8. What’s the greatest risk you have ever taken for Christ? How did it play out?

9. Please share a time when you experienced great need and how God met it.

10. What weekly Bible study are you a part of and how has that involvement impacted you?

11. What gifts other than your musical abilities will you bring to the worship team?

12. Please briefly share your personal testimony.
Those who lead the worship of God need much more than the ability to play chords and scales. If people are going to lead others in worship, they must be spiritually mature. They must be people who have tasted God’s goodness, who have taken risks to be faithful and have seen God deliver them, who have felt great needs and experienced God meeting them. In short, to be spiritually mature they must know God and know themselves.

This spiritual maturity is also required because of the amount of attention worship team members will receive from their congregation. Admiration and acclaim, if not tempered with the wisdom of spiritual maturity, can cause worship leaders to idolize their position. Our sense of importance must come from God, and we must lead people to reflect on God's importance in worship, not our own.

WORSHIP COVENANT

As the Worship Pastor of FBCMJ, I commit to equip this servant and support this ministry. I will be responsive to needs that arise, and I will provide resources necessary for this ministry to be accomplished with excellence.

Realizing it is the primary call of Christians to worship the Most High God, if I am chosen to be part of the FBCMJ Worship Praise Team, I commit to fulfill my responsibilities outlined within this handbook toward the end of excellence, remembering always that my labor is for God in His kingdom.