



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

**2024**



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# Welcome.

On behalf of the entire community of Ross Road Church, we are very excited that you have chosen to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and His church as part of our worship and the arts ministry. It is my hope that, through our worship program, you discover and grow in the gifts that God has given you and that you would be energized and fulfilled as you use those gifts to bless and enrich our church.

I look forward to serving along side you for the glory of our Lord.

**Dave Rodda**

*Pastor of Worship and the Arts  
Ross Road Community Church*



# Our Approach to Worship

## P R E A M B L E

The purpose of this paper is to summarize what God taught us and reminded us about worship in the fall of 2012. To listen to Him and each other, we spent three weeks in personal study as well as studying worship in our Sunday gatherings and small groups. During that time we also heard each other's hearts in a town hall gathering as we sought to answer the question, "How can we at RRCC unite in wholehearted worship that brings pleasure to God?" Our "Worship Discussion Paper" explains how loving God supremely and loving each other, as Jesus loves us, results in such worship. And as we live out together the ideas expressed below, we will come to more fully share a common understanding and approach to worship.

## H O W W E D E F I N E W O R S H I P

Jesus' defence of Mary gives us a concrete picture of worship. Mary poured expensive perfume on Jesus' feet because she loved Him. She helps us to see that worship is doing a beautiful thing to the Triune God—pouring out our love on Him. (Matthew 26:1-16; Mark 14:1-11; John 12:1-8)

We understand that worship is our response to God's worth. As John Piper expresses it, "Worship is a way of gladly reflecting back to God the radiance of his worth." We do this to express our love to Him.





## HOW WE EXPRESS WORSHIP

The intergenerational character of our RRCC family is a high value for us. We reflect this value in our sensitivity to one another as we plan and express worship. We also reflect it in our Celebration Sundays, when the whole church worships together in a way that embraces the understanding and engagement of as many as possible.

A volunteer-driven worship ministry as compared to a professional-driven ministry is also a high value for us. At RRCC, the body of Christ leads the body of Christ in worship. While we strive for excellence, we do not strive for a perfection that eliminates wholehearted worshippers from leadership because of unrealistic skill or time expectations.

In addition, we seek a breadth of expression in God-honouring worship, rather than maintaining uniformity from Sunday to Sunday or emphasizing one aspect of worship at the expense of another. Because God is infinite and humans are complex, we understand that expressing worship is multifaceted, as expressed below.

## MUSIC AND WHOLE LIFE

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## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

Worship is a matter of the heart and yet, just as in human relationships, physical expressiveness is important. Our goal is to worship with all our inmost being (Psalm 103:1) and, at the same time, appropriately express our feelings physically. We are inspired by the psalms where we find worshippers clapping, singing, bowing down, kneeling, lifting hands, shouting, playing numerous instruments, dancing, and standing in silent awe.

## CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

We value worship that is rooted in the ancient words and unchanging truths of the Bible and in historic songs and readings while valuing, at the same time, new approaches to worship that are also faithful to eternal truth (Psalm 96:1). Within this broad continuum, we do not resolve the tension between historic and recent music with mathematical percentages but rather by viewing all songs as expressions of worship and selecting music on the basis of theme, all the while being sensitive to one another.

## VARIETY AND FAMILIARITY

We delight in diversity within our church family—ages, origins, personalities, and preferences. We recognize the value of variety (music genres, special music, prayers, liturgies, scripture reading, worship leaders, sermon styles, testimonies, ordinances, worship order, use of the arts, prayer ministry) to keep our experiences of worship rich and fresh. At the same time, we most easily enter into worship when we are familiar with the material used. We particularly value thoughtfulness in assisting us to learn new songs.

## PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL

We accept each other as unique individuals, who prefer some worship languages to others, finding they make it easier to express ourselves to God. Yet, love for one another gives us the desire to help each other worship well. We do this by embracing each other's worship languages and helping others learn ours. We see forgiveness and reconciliation as prerequisites for unified worship. In corporate worship we multiply not only volume but also expressions of love for God and each other.



## TRUTH AND EXPERIENCE

We value prayers, readings, lyrics, and preaching that are theologically rich and those that express our personal experience of God.

## EMOTION AND MIND

“The engagement of the heart in worship is the coming alive of the feelings and emotions and affections of the heart. Where feelings for God are dead, worship is dead.”<sup>1</sup> Yet, worship that is only emotion is also dead. We express feelings in worship and we engage God with our entire mind, thinking truth and reflecting on God’s worth.

## GOD’S PLEASURE AND OUR SATISFACTION

When we seek God’s pleasure in worship, we are deeply satisfied because we are doing that for which we were made. We guard against worshipping worship—enjoying worship for its own sake. When a song or service element does not appeal to us, we seek to maintain our focus on God and His truth.

## FOCUSING ON GOD AND IMPACTING OTHERS

While true worship focuses on God and cares little about what others think of us as we worship, we take seriously the fact that worship rightly impacts others for good. Authentic worship, by focusing on God in a way that is sensitive to others, builds up believers and powerfully attracts seekers.



# How We Respond to What God is Saying to Us

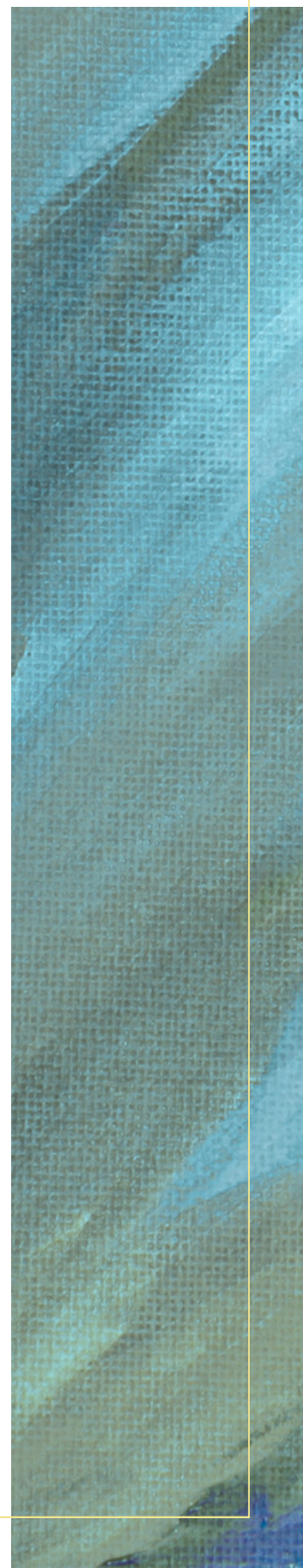
Having asked God to guide us in our approach to worship, our pastors and elders have summarized what we believe the church family is hearing from God. We invite us all to continue the conversation with further thoughts and insights.

Our collective responsibility now, even as we continue listening to each other, is to act on what we are learning in order to unite in wholehearted worship that brings pleasure to God. To reach for the worship about which we read in Revelation four and five, worship we will one day enjoy in eternity, worshippers and worship leaders must join together as one grand worship team to the glory of God.

Conscientious preparation is fundamental to our success. With that in mind, we conclude with suggested reflections for us all.

## REFLECTIONS FOR WORSHIPPERS

- Do I daily give myself to God as a gift of worship? (Romans 12:1)
- Do I prepare my heart for our corporate worship?
- Do I arrive on time and unhurried for corporate worship?
- Do I pray through the week for God's work in and through us as we gather?
- Do I come to worship with a desire to delight God's heart and serve my fellow worshippers?
- Do I remember that we not only gather to be strengthened by connecting with God and each other but we also scatter to impact our world for God?

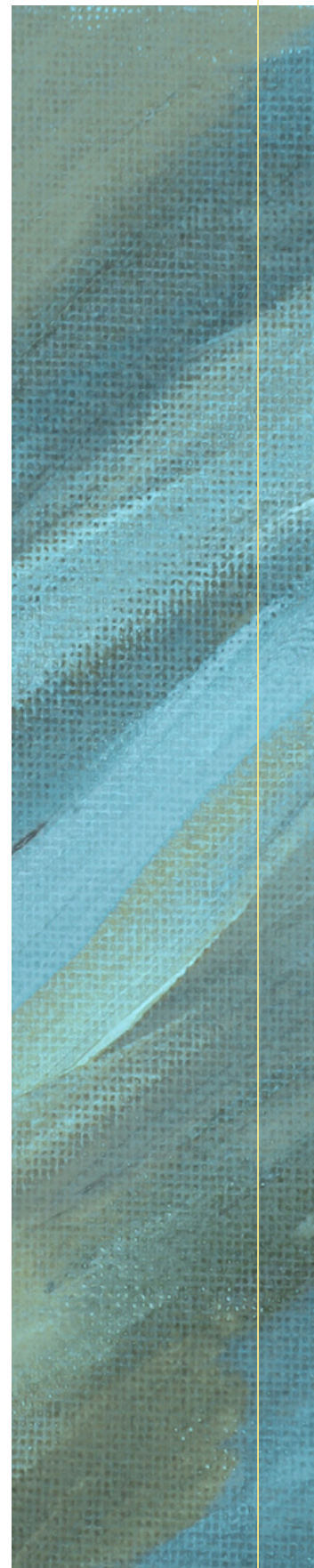






## REFLECTIONS FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

- How are we assisting worshippers to prepare during the prelude?
- How are we inviting God's people into worship?
- How is God honoured?
- How is the Gospel communicated?
- How is the theme expressed?
- How are we using scripture?
- How are we making the most of prayer?
- How are we promoting worship through giving?
- How are we hearing the voices of our community of believers—males and females of varying ages and life circumstances?
- How is it thoughtful of our believing community?
- How does it draw our unbelieving community?
- What is the flow of content, mood, and activity?
- Are we offering God and His people our best?
- Can I picture God's pleasure?
- Is there anything about which I am in doubt?
- Are these the best musical choices?
- Easily playable and singable?
- True to God's Word?
- Appropriate mood?
- Staying power?
- Does it exalt Christ and His cross?





# Guidelines for Vocalists and Instrumentalists

## WEEKLY REHEARSAL TIME

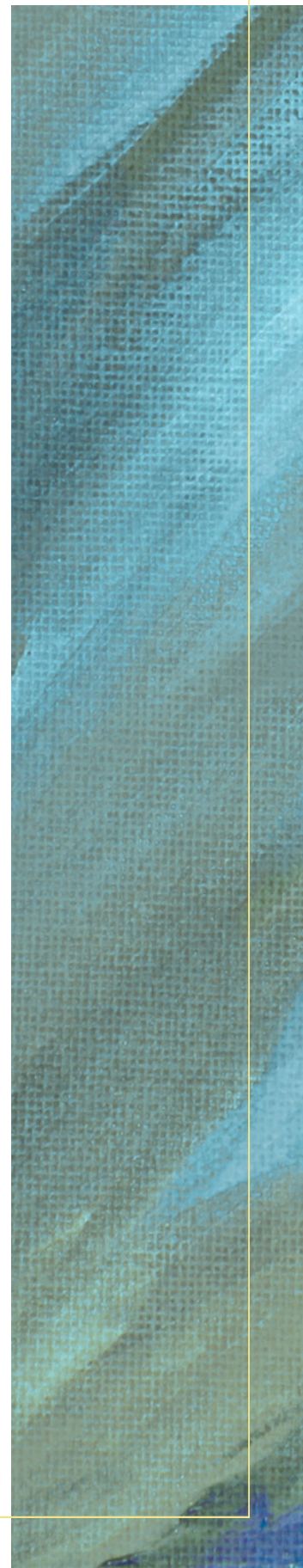
Musicians and vocalists are expected to spend a minimum of one hour in personal rehearsal before the Sunday morning band rehearsal. There are two primary resources for this rehearsal time.

Planning Centre- In the service order view on planning centre there is a rehearse button that gives you access to all the music sheets for that service as well as audio and/or video files for all the songs in the service.

The Worship Initiative- This is an online worship resource that includes training/practice videos for a lot of the songs that we regularly play for Sunday services. Each song includes videos for acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass, drums and keys. There are also playback options for vocalists that bring the harmony parts up higher in the mix in order to hear them more clearly.

## PERSONAL MONITOR SYSTEM

Our stage at RRCC is equipped with an in-ear personal monitor system. This allows you to hear yourself and the rest of the worship team through earphones that are provided. You may also use your own ear buds from home.





## STAGE PRESENCE- LET'S SMILE

As member of the worship team we lead not only with our voice or instrument but also with our presence and demeanour on stage. Our goal is not to approach Sunday morning services like performers in a concert, however, being conscious of how we are communicating with our body language and facial expressions. Here are some key categories of how we can intentionally engage with the congregation as we are on stage.

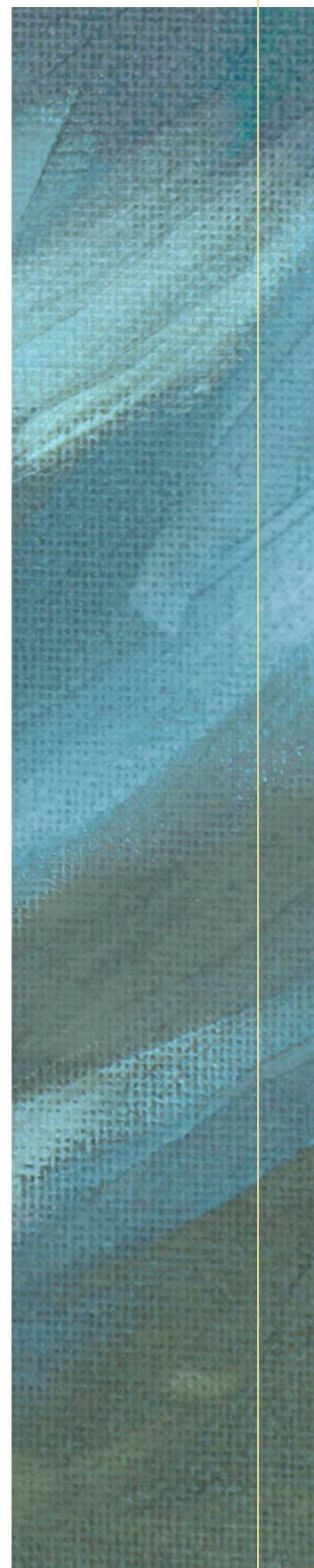
**Smile-** Try to make eye contact with people in the congregation and smile naturally.

**Move** - Don't be afraid to express yourself by moving and gesturing with your hands.

**Invite** - Encourage participation in singing and worshipful expression by connecting with individuals and showing genuine enjoyment as you lead.

**Look** - Try not to look at the sheet music the whole time and keep your focus on the people as much as possible.

**Energize** - demonstrate the kind of energy that you would like the congregation to be expressing during the music.





# Guidelines for...

## A/V TECHS

Check the stage before the practice to make sure the instruments, microphones, lights and equipment are all in place and ready to use. Refer to the A/V procedures document on the website for the detailed explanation of your responsibilities for Sunday morning services.

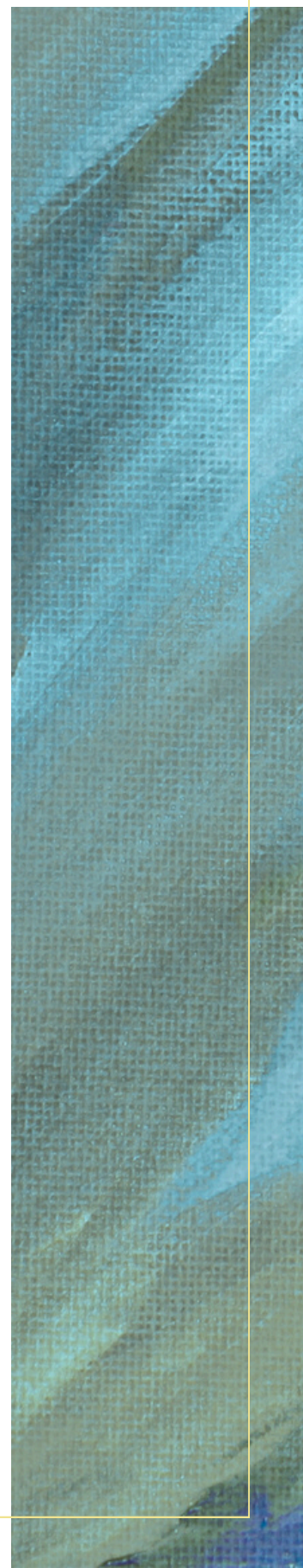
## WORSHIP LEADERS

### **Song selection and communication**

Worship leaders are responsible for selecting the music used in the service that they are leading and for communicating with their worship team during the week. The deadline for having the music in the planning centre service order and for communicating with the team is Wednesday at noon.

### **Sunday morning practice**

Worship leaders are also responsible for being prepared to lead the practice on Sunday morning by having prepared basic song arrangements and selected the appropriate keys for the songs.





# Volunteer Commitment Document

Having clear expectations and communication is important within any team. The following expectations apply to everyone in our church ministry area regardless of specific role. Committing to being on a worship team entails a commitment to these expectations.

## TIMELY CORRESPONDENCE

Planning Centre is our primary means of communication regarding scheduling, events and corresponding about week-night practices. Invitations for playing on specific Sundays are sent out every four months (approx). It is important that you respond to these invites as quickly as possible. This allows me to know who is available for the scheduled dates and have time to make changes around date conflicts.

Everyone has access to their own planning centre profile settings. This allows you to keep your contact info up to date and to select the manner in which you would like to be contacted. Planning centre also has a mobile App the allows you to see and respond to invites, and see your current scheduled dates.

## PERSONAL REHEARSAL TIME

Musicians and vocalists are expected to spend a minimum of one hour in personal rehearsal before the week-night band rehearsal. There are two primary resources for this rehearsal time.

**Planning Centre-** In the service order view on planning centre there is a rehearse button that gives you access to all the music sheets for that service as well as audio and/or video files for all the songs in the service.

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Between these two resources musicians and vocalists should be able to become very familiar with their parts for most of the songs in the set before the week-night band rehearsal.



# Volunteer Commitment Document

## REGULAR CHURCH PARTICIPATION

Church membership is not a pre-requisite for playing on a team or serving in other capacities in the church, however, we expect that people serving regularly on a worship team consider Ross Road their church home and are actively engaging in the broader life of the church. This includes regular participation in Sunday morning worship even when not serving on a worship team.

## PARTICIPATION IN ROSS ROAD WORSHIP TRAINING

Every year we will meet for a training day that will include a review of procedures, expectations and training resources for worship ministry volunteers. In-person attendance is preferable for all but video and print resources will also be made available on the Ross Road Worship website. It is the responsibility of each volunteer to make themselves familiar with that training material either through attendance of the in-person event or by thoroughly reviewing the online content.

## GROWTH

It is expected that every person involved in the music and worship program at RRCC is committed to spiritual and musical growth. This means involvement in applicable small groups and Sunday service attendance. Musically, it means practice outside of worship team practices and possibly pursuing organized training or lessons.



# Conclusion

## WHY DOES THIS STUFF MATTER?

When it comes church ministry work it is very important to be clear about our motivation for pursuing certain goals like this. The motivation for these changes is not just to have better sounding music on Sunday mornings, it is not about conformity or administrative efficiency. These things by themselves are not worthy goals for a church worship ministry.

What I have discovered, however, is that if there is clear communication and everyone knows their roles and responsibilities, if everyone on the team for a Sunday service is prepared and comes to the band rehearsal, and if the rehearsal is managed well then the team feels more comfortable and confident about the music. This allows the worship leader, musicians and vocalists to focus less on the mechanics of the music itself and focus more on being present for worship themselves and engage with the congregation more fully. That means a potentially richer and more intentional time of worship together and that is a worthy goal. That is a my motivation for instituting these expectations and I hope that can be your motivation for serving with me accordingly.

God has blessed our church with a love of music and worship and many people with musical gifts and passion. I am continually grateful for the opportunity to provide leadership and direction to our worship ministry, but above all, for the opportunity to work together with all of you as week seek to love and worship God together with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Yours in His service

Dave Rodda

