



MEMBER HANDBOOK 2024-2025



Welcome to Capital Ringers Inc.

March 2024

This handbook is designed to provide you general information about our organization, our operation, and our expectations of you as a ringing or non-ringing member of Capital Ringers, Inc. (CRI) which includes ringers in Bay2Bay Ringers (B2B), ringers in Capital Ringers Ensemble (CRE), non-ringing members, and volunteers.

Membership in CRI is a commitment of time and talent. In return, you will be part of the team that inspires and impacts audiences, as well as ringers and directors from other organizations. If you are a ringer, you will be expected to challenge yourself to a higher level of technical ringing proficiency as you work with a team of other dedicated ringers and members.

If you are a non-ringing member, your behind-the-scenes work is crucial to the success of this organization and you, too, are impacting our audiences with your skills and time.

It is important that every member of Capital Ringers, Inc. promotes the art of handbell and handchime ringing in the community at every opportunity. We strive to educate and entertain our audience and inspire other ringers!


Kevin B. Chamberlain
Artistic Director


John Smeallie
President

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Note: The final section includes links to our application forms, as well as our sexual harassment and non-discrimination policies. They are available on our website and are linked to later in this document.





Warming up for spring 2023 performance of “I Got Rhythm.”

Organizational overview

Mission

Igniting Hearts and Minds Through the Power of Music.

Purpose

The purpose of Capital Ringers Inc. is to educate and entertain audiences through the unique and innovative performance and instruction of English Handbells and Handchimes.

Vision

People Sharing Dynamic Musical Experiences!

History

Capital Ringers Inc. (CRI) was founded in 2004, and was granted non-profit status in 2005. The vision of our founder, Linda S. Simms, was to establish a com-

munity handbell ensemble to provide an opportunity for advanced ringers to perform challenging repertoire and to inspire beginning ringers to learn more and improve their ringing.

Starting out with borrowed bells from a local church, the group was able to purchase its own equipment in 200.

In 2020, CRI began an extensive organizational review and worked with the Delaware Alliance for Non-Profit Advancement to build a governance structure that would help the group move to a higher level of excellence and ensure long-term stability. With the pandemic of 2021, CRI pivoted to an innovative rehearsal and performance model that enabled Capital Ringers Ensemble (CRE) to continue providing its music to audiences through virtual performances. With its Tid-

ings of Comfort and Joy concert in December 2020 and Rise Up in June 2021, Capital Ringers were able to continue making music and its audiences still enjoyed musical inspiration.

Governance and Structure

CRI and its members are governed by its bylaws. All members have access to the [Capital Ringers Bylaws](#). All members are urged to become familiar with the bylaws of the corporation, which include procedural information about the organization’s administrative operation along with details of the organization’s structure and functioning.

Governance is accomplished through CRI’s Board of Directors. This Board consists of four elected Directors (President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Director of



Donor Relations and four appointed Directors (Artistic Director, Media and Marketing Support Team Leader, Member Support Team Leader, and Outreach Support Team Leader). The Board of Directors or its Executive Committee meets monthly and provide guidance to CRI through planning, budgeting, administration, policy, and development.

Structurally, CRI consists of its two ringing ensembles (B2B and CRE) along with valuable non-ringing members who provide support through Board membership, technical expertise for recordings and concerts, community outreach and more. CRI's support structure is provided through five Support Teams (Administrative; Media and Marketing; Member, Music and Events; and Outreach). These teams include ringers from B2B and

CRE as well as non-ringing members and ensure that administrative functions are maintained; marketing is accomplished effectively; equipment is managed efficiently; venues are chosen well; members are recruited, oriented, and developed; community outreach is sustained, along with a host of other activities to keep the organization functioning at the highest possible level.

More detailed information regarding the Board of Directors and the Support Teams can be found in [Appendix I](#), CRI Board of Directors Organization, and [Appendix II](#), Support Team Structure. If members have any questions regarding these groups, they are encouraged to contact any Board member.



Membership Overview

A. Ringing Membership

There are two ringing groups in CRI.

1. The *Capital Ringers Ensemble (CRE)* is an advanced community handbell ensemble, ringing multiple performances per season (Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter) under the direction of CRI's Artistic Director.

Membership in CRE is open to handbell ringers 18 years of age and older. Members must continue to demonstrate an adequate skill level and may be required to audition annually. Prospective ringers will be evaluated during a 30-day probationary period to confirm that they meet the requirements of the Artistic Director before being approved for

membership. A prospective ringer may be asked to shadow a position or share a position. A commitment to a positive attitude and cooperative behavior is imperative for membership in the ensemble.

2. The *Bay2Bay Ringers (B2B)* is a developmental ringing ensemble with the following purpose: to prepare new CRI members for a ringing position in CRE; provide training in beginning and intermediate ringing techniques; and provide to less intensive live audience performances that assist CRI's community outreach plan. Ringers will be eligible to participate in such performances based on a rubric developed by the Artistic Director in consultation with the Bay2Bay director.

Membership in B2B is open to handbell ringers 18

years of age and older. A commitment to a positive attitude and cooperative behavior is important for membership in the ensemble. Movement from B2B to CRE will be determined by the Artistic Director in consultation with the B2B Director.

B. Non-Ringing Membership

Non-ringers are vital to the mission of CRI and can become members through Board membership or active participation in one or more Support Teams. There is no fee for a non-ringing membership. A commitment to a positive attitude and cooperative behavior is important for non-ringing membership.





Judy Moore directs the Bay2Bay Ringers, our beginner and intermediate ensemble. They also practice at Avenue United Methodist Church in Milford.

Membership policies

In the event there is no Member Support Team Leader, the Artistic Director handles all issues pertaining to ringers (CRE and B2B), and the applicable Support Team Leaders handle all issues pertaining to members of their teams.

A. Application Process

1. Individuals interested in joining CRI will complete the appropriate application.
 - a. Ringer Application
 - b. Non-Ringer Application
2. Submit the application to Member Support Team Leader.
3. The Member Support Team Leader receives applications and forwards them to:
 - a. Artistic Director (ringer applications). who

reviews, interviews, and makes recommendations for appropriate ensemble or rejects application; or

- b. Applicable Support Team Leader (non-ringer applications), who makes recommendations on placement or rejects application.

1. Recommended applications are forwarded to the Board of Directors for action. Non-accepted applicants are notified by the Member Support Team Leader. A \$100 initial member fee is due from all approved CRE ringing members upon approval of their application by the Board.

B. Membership Status

1. **Probationary Period:** A 30-day membership probationary period, tracked by the Member

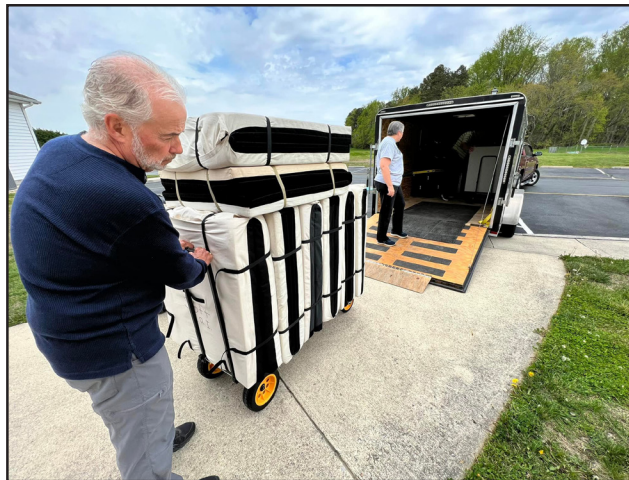
Support Team Leader, is in effect following approval. After satisfactory completion of this probationary period, new members become voting members of CRI. Ringers who do not satisfactorily complete their probationary period will be refunded the \$100 initial member fee.

2. **Leave of Absence:** Members may submit a Leave of Absence request (in writing) of up to one year to the Member Support Team Leader. A decision on whether to grant a Leave of Absence is made by the Artistic Director (for ringers) or the applicable Support Team Leader in consultation with the Member Support Team Leader (for non-ringers). Handbell ensembles require continuity and stability with regard to ringing positions; thus, it cannot be guaran-



teed that there will be a position available for ringers wishing to return from a Leave of Absence. Members on Leave of Absence are not voting members of the organization but will remain on the organization email list. At the end of the Leave of Absence period, the Artistic Director (for ringers) or Applicable Support Team Leader (for non-ringers) will determine if a member may return, and the Member Support Team Leader will notify the member of their status.

3. **Resignation:** Ringers are expected to inform the Artistic Director in writing by January 1 if they will not be available for the subsequent Fall Season and by September 1 if they will not be available for the subsequent Spring Season. Non-ringers are expected to inform their Support Team Leader in writing by January 1 if they will not be available for the subsequent Fall Season and by September 1 if they will not be available for the subsequent Spring Season.
4. **Discharge:** If warranted, members may be subject to discharge from the organization; CRI's policy related to this may be found in Appendix IX, Discharge Policy.
5. **Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policies:** CRI is committed to ensuring that all aspects of the organization are operated and maintained in an environment free of discrimination or harassment. CRI's policies with regard to these matters may be found in **Appendix VI, Anti-Discrimination Policy**, and **Appendix VII, Anti-Harassment Policy**. Members will be asked to sign an **acknowledgment** regarding these policies as well as commitment to serving as members in accordance with this Handbook (see **Appendix VIII**). These board policies are also on our [website](#).



Membership Expectations and Opportunities

Unless otherwise noted, this section applies mainly to members of Capital Ringers Ensemble (CRE).

A. Attendance at Rehearsals

1. Ringing members are expected to attend every rehearsal. Sunday afternoons, usually from 2 to 5 p.m., are Capital Ringers' rehearsal time in the fall and late winter-early spring.
2. If a ringing member has a conflict or will be late to a rehearsal or performance, the ringing member should email, phone, or text the Artistic Director or the Director's designee as soon as possible.
3. Attendance at all rehearsals is crucial. Plans to be absent from more than two rehearsals must be discussed with and approved by the Artistic Director as soon as possible.

B. Musical Preparation

Members are expected to dedicate time outside of

rehearsal to practicing and learning notes and rhythm. The goal of rehearsals is to perfect ensemble techniques. Ringers are encouraged to borrow handbells and chimes to facilitate individual practice.

C. Rehearsals in General

1. Capital Ringers Ensemble rehearses at Avenue United Methodist Church, 20 N. Church St., Milford, Delaware.
2. Prior to performances, additional rehearsals may be necessary. All members will have input on the dates and times selected for additional rehearsals and are expected to attend.
3. All cell phones and other devices must be turned off or put on silent mode during rehearsals. Keeping a phone on, due to extenuating circumstances, may be allowed at the discretion of the Artistic Director. Electronic

distractions do not contribute to a productive rehearsal.

4. It is important that everyone work collaboratively, keeping in mind that the overall musical result is more important than the individual. Maintaining flexibility throughout the rehearsal process, keeping open to constructive criticism, and a positive attitude are important for the success of the ensemble.
5. Food and beverages must be kept away from instruments and equipment. Chewing gum is not allowed in rehearsal, workshops, performances, or any other function when musical equipment is in use.

D. Attendance at Performances

1. The artistic director makes every attempt to communicate concert dates and locations at



least six months in advance.

2. All concert participants (ringers and non-ring-ers) should become familiar with the performance schedule and plan accordingly. CRE currently does not have enough ringing members to enable substitutions for concert performances. If you believe you will miss a concert performance date, please contact the artistic director immediately.
3. Unless a host venue is providing a meal, each member will be responsible for bringing their own food and beverages.

E. Uniforms

1. Members will be issued a formal concert uniform as well as polo shirts.
2. Members should have black gloves with no holes for performances.
3. Shoes must be all black, including the soles.
4. Members are to return all concert uniform pieces upon leaving CRI.

F. Safety

Non-ringing volunteers make invaluable contributions to the success of our organization and performances.

There are situations during rehearsals and performances when safety needs to have a greater focus. All members need to be aware of cables that could be on the floor at venues, which present a tripping hazard. Additionally, when loading and unloading the trailer, members need to follow the directions of the Equipment Manager and know their specific assignment for moving equipment.

G. Transportation

1. Each member is responsible for his/her own transportation to and from rehearsals. Car-pools are encouraged for rehearsals, concerts and other events.
2. Drivers transporting multiple ringers or equipment during concert tours may request reimbursement of their expenses from the Treasurer. Reimbursement allowance will be half the IRS reimbursement rate.

H. Attendance at membership and board meetings

All CRI members are strongly encouraged to attend the annual meeting, normally held in June. Board meetings

are held throughout the year. Board members are the only voting members at these meetings. Other members are invited to attend.

I. Financial contributions

While some CRI funding is received through grants, most of the organization's income is derived from performance fees, donations, and occasional fundraisers. Beyond their initial fee, members are encouraged to support fundraising activities; many make a regular contribution or monthly pledge.

J. Member engagement (all members)

1. Every member is expected to find a way to become engaged in CRI beyond ringing. While there is no rigid requirement, each member brings skills and interests that can help support and sustain the organization.
2. Here are some ways members can choose to engage with the organization:
 - Concert publicity and promotion via social media
 - Liaison with venues to ensure they are getting



the word out

- Financial support
- Mentoring new ringers
- Setting up, taking down, maintaining equipment
- Handbell demonstrations, such as in schools
- Community outreach such as quartets
- Ushering at concerts
- Serving in a leadership role, such as on the Board of Directors or as a Support Team Leader (please see [Appendix I](#), Board of Directors Organization; and [Appendix II](#), Support Teams Structure).
- Assisting with administrative functions

K. Communication and Social Media (both groups)

1. **Facebook:** Capital Ringers is on [Facebook](#) with more than 1,600 followers. Members with Facebook and other social media accounts are encouraged to share posts with friends, especially about upcoming events.

2. There is also a “*Members of Capital Ringers*” closed Facebook group for active members.
3. **Website:** The media and marketing support team maintains a website at <https://capitalringers.org>. Information about the organization and upcoming events is included on the website. This site includes a members-only, password-protected page. There is some redundancy with this page and CRI’s SharePoint site.
4. **Email:** The business of the corporation is often handled via email. It is the responsibility of every member to respond to emails within 48 hours when possible.
5. **SharePoint:** The organization has created a SharePoint site as a repository for financial and administrative data and functions, documents, graphic assets, presentations and analyses, Capital Ringers support teams, and other valuable information. It includes a full calendar and up-to-date roster of members. While board members and support team leaders are the most active users of SharePoint, all members should acquaint themselves with the site after receiving a brief tutorial.

Our Equipment

A. Available inventory

Capital Ringers owns the largest set of handbells and chimes on the Delmarva Peninsula. Each piece of equipment is valuable and members should treat them with respect. Questions about handling and treatment of bells should be addressed to an equipment team member or experienced ringers.

The following are routinely used in Capital Ringer Ensemble performances:

1. **Schulmerich Handbells:** 6 octaves (73 Handbells) – our main set of bells manufactured near Philadelphia.
2. **Whitechapel Handbells:** 5 octaves (61 Handbells) – Whitechapel Handbells are manufactured in London and have a uniquely different sound from the Schulmerich Handbells providing a diversity to our performances.
3. **Schulmerich Handbells:** A second three-octave set for use by Bay2Bay Ringers



4. **Malmark Handchimes:** 6 octaves (67 hand-chimes)
5. **Malmark Cymbells:** 13 bells – unique hand-bells without the handle mounted on a rack
6. **Silver Melody Bells:** 2 octaves – 25 bells – nickel-plated brass bells with a distinctive sound manufactured by Malmark
7. **Musser Chrome Symphonic (Tubular) Chimes:** 1.5 Octaves (18 tubes) The deep resonance of this instrument is another unique sound which simulates the bells in the towers of churches, giving another layer of audible and visual experience for audiences
8. **Suzuki Handchimes:** 3 octaves – gifted to Capital Ringers by the Indian River Senior Center these chimes will be used as part of our outreach program to schools
9. A significant amount of **Audio/Visual Recording/Projecting equipment** allowing CRI to create multimedia productions for its perfor-

mances and record ringers for virtual shows.

B. Equipment Maintenance and Care

1. Ringers are responsible for handling bells and chimes in an appropriate fashion. This means carefully removing and replacing them in their cases, ensuring that the bells and chimes are kept away from the edge of the table and treating them with care. Each bell and chime is a very expensive instrument. Ringers are asked to keep that in mind anytime they are near the instruments.
2. All ringers are required to wipe off their bells using a “sunshine” yellow polishing cloth following each rehearsal. Instruction will be given on the proper method of polishing to avoid torquing the bell.
3. Bells will be thoroughly polished before each concert season, and ringers are asked to assist with this task that usually occurs on a Saturday prior to the beginning of the concert season.

C. Borrowing Equipment

1. CRE members are allowed, and expected, to borrow their assigned bells, chimes, mallets and pads if needed prior to the initial rehearsal of each season to learn their parts. This allows the ensemble to spend rehearsal times finetuning the ensemble sound and not learning individual parts.
2. Borrowed bells should be treated with great care, transported in a well-padded container, cleaned after each use and kept in a safe location while in the ringer’s home.
3. An electronic sign-out/in form must be completed when borrowing and returning bells and any other equipment. This form is on the members page of the Capital Ringers website and in SharePoint.

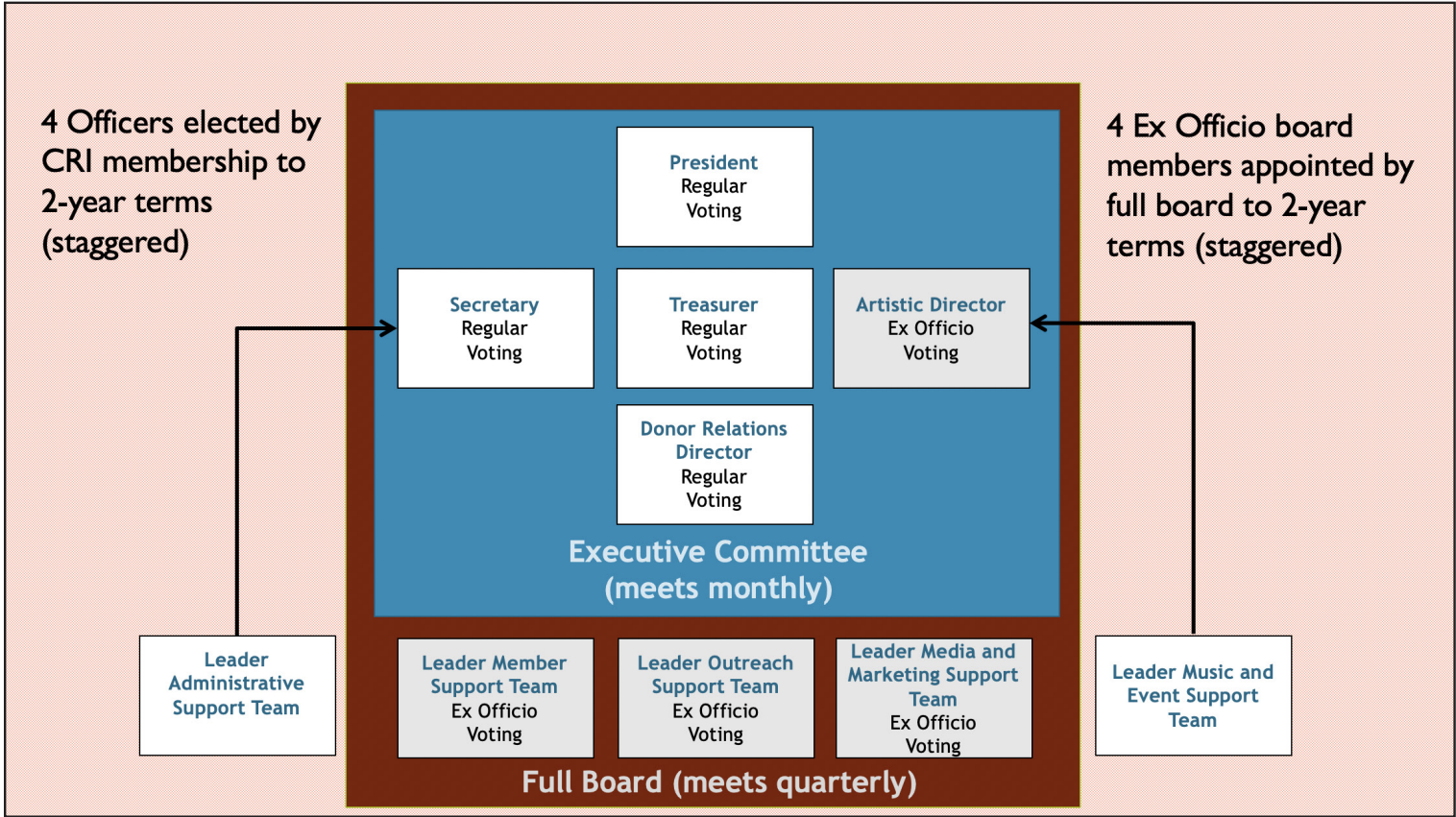


Appendix

- I. Board of Directors Organization
- II. Support Teams Structure
- III. Bay2Bay Policy
- IV. Application (Ringers)
- V. Application (Non-Ringers)
- VI. Anti-Discrimination Policy
- VII. Anti-Harassment Policy
- VIII. Acknowledgement Sign-Off for Anti-Discrimination Policy, Anti-Harassment Policy, and Member Handbook
- IX. Discharge policy

The first three items are included in this document. Appendix IV-IX are included on the Capital Ringers website by going to our “Join Capital Ringers” page.

Appendix I: Board of Directors Organization



Appendix II: Support Team Structure

The descriptions below each support team show suggested tasks and/or activities attributed to a support team, not specific positions or committees.



Appendix III: Bay2Bay Policy

Purpose of Bay2Bay Ensemble:

- Provide training in beginning and intermediate ringing techniques;
- Provide exposure to less intensive live audience performances that assist CRI’s community outreach plan; and
- Prepare new Capital Ringer, Incorporated (CRI) members for a ringing position in the Capital Ringers Ensemble (CRE).



Member Recruitment Criteria:

Newly recruited Bay2Bay ringers must:

- Be able to read music;
- Commit to regular attendance at rehearsals;
- Have a desire to learn to ring and improve ringing skills; and
- Be at least 18 years old.

Leadership Elements:

- The Artistic Director makes recommendations to the Board for the position of Bay2Bay Director.
- The Bay2Bay Director reports to the Artistic Director regarding ringer progress and other matters, as appropriate and requested.
- The Artistic Director can release a member of Bay2Bay (due to a lack of progress in ringing skill/technique) in consultation with the Bay2Bay Director.

Adopted by the Board of Directors on 4/4/2023

