Performance Notes

Consider the words of the hymn and each stanza when considering the piece. Be sure that the melody is always heard above the accompaniment patterns. Work with choirs to "feel the syncopation," perhaps rehearsing rung sections with stopped techniques. When there is a dotted quarter note on beat 1, the conductor can help the ensemble feel the off beat of the + of 2 by giving emphasis to beat 2 in the conducting pattern.



Brenda Austin, a native of Southwest Michigan, has been serving First United Methodist Church in Eaton Rapids, MI, as Director of Worship and Music since 2003. Brenda directs several handbell choirs of all ages and levels, as well as the Chancel Choir and Praise Band. Each year the church hosts an annual handbell festival where Brenda has served as conductor and clinician.

Brenda graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from Western Michigan University. Brenda completed her Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, under the tutorship of Master Conductor Eph Ehly. Brenda received many awards for her conducting, including being a semi-finalist in the ACDA National Student Conducting Competition in Washington D.C., and a finalist in the Graduate ACDA Student Conducting Competition in San Diego, CA.

Brenda has been teaching and directing music in the church for 20 years. She loves to inspire musicians of all levels to experience music through her high-energy style rehearsals. Brenda is also very active in Handbell Musicians of America and has been serving as the Education Chair to AREA 5 for four years, teaching and conducting at various events.

Simple Gifts

for 3–5 octaves of Handbells with optional 3-5 octaves of Handchimes



















