



## 29TH ANNUAL HANDBELL FESTIVAL

We had a fantastic handbell festival on March 11. Almost 70 ringers were present for a great time of learning and fellowship with composer and clinician Jason Krug. Grace UMC in Salem, IL served as gracious hosts. Although we missed several of you, your IGRC Fellowship Chapter was excited to host its 29th annual handbell festival on Saturday, March 11, 2017 at Grace UMC in Salem, IL to connect with folks in the southern part of IGRC. We will return to central Illinois next year. Check out these photos of the group in action!



### UPCOMING FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

- June 25-30, 2017 - Music and Worship Arts Week**  
Lake Junaluska, NC
- July 24-27, 2017 - Biennial Convocation**  
Little Rock, AR
- August 19, 2017 - Choral Reading Session**  
First UMC - Vandalia, IL
- October 21, 2017 - Worship Software Workshop**  
Midstate College - Peoria, IL

Interested in hosting one of our chapter events? We want to continue to provide opportunities in various locations. Recent events have been held in Normal, Peoria, Springfield, Effingham, and Salem. If you would like to serve as a host, please contact [Doug Grogan](#).



What do you know about *The Fellowship*? We are Christians embracing God's artistic gifts to create world-transforming worship. *The Fellowship* exists at both national and chapter levels. You can find out more about the national level by visiting their [website](#), and find out more about our chapter on our [website](#).

#### MORE ABOUT UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

##### **Fellowship Choral Reading Session**

Focus: Sacred Choral Music Reading Session co-sponsored by Kidder Music

Who: Choral Directors

When: Saturday, August 19, 2017, 9:00 am - noon

Where: First United Methodist Church, Vandalia, IL

Cost: \$5 due the day of the event; light refreshments will be provided



Register online at <http://fumcpeoria.wufoo.com/forms/igrc-fellowship-choral-reading-session/>

##### **Worship Software Workshop**

Focus: How to use the presentation software of MediaShout and ProPresenter.

Who: Those who make worship slides or run the software during worship.

When: Saturday, October 21, 2017

Where: Midstate College in Peoria, IL.

This will be a hands-on workshop with each participant being provide access to a computer workstation. Please go online to express your interest in which software you would like to learn more about. We will set the workshop schedule based on interest and then send out specific registration information in August. This workshop is for those with no experience to novices. List your preference here: <http://fumcpeoria.wufoo.com/forms/z1vneacf1dapb0d/>

##### **30th Annual Handbell Festival**

Back by popular demand, our guest clinician for the 30th Annual Handbell Festival will be David Harris, director of the Raleigh Ringers. Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 10, 2018! Keep watching the newsletter for specifics on registration and location.



## Rising Prayers, Falling Grace; an Interactive Liturgical Art Installation

Aaron Schultz

As a Worship and Arts Director at a Presbyterian church in Peoria, IL, I am always in search of how to integrate visual art into the worshiping life of the community I serve. Interactive liturgical art has been something I have been very excited about lately. I use this term to describe visual art that functions liturgically and is constructed (at least in part) by the worshiping community. In the wake of our Easter celebrations, I would like to tell you about an installation I did a few years back for Pentecost.

Throughout Eastertide (the Great 50 Days) we are led through the work of the Holy Spirit as the Church of Christ takes form. The season of Eastertide leads up to the celebration of Pentecost. The most significant symbol of Pentecost is the flame; indicating the showering upon of God's people with the power and gift of the Holy Spirit. Most times, we visualize the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a descending motion. God sends us the Spirit of God's self, showering us with divine presence. But I believe there is also a movement upwards where humanity becomes better equipped to share the love of Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. With God's presence we are affirmed in the goodness of what it means to be human and made in God's image. During Pentecost we rejoice in God's gracious offering of the Holy Spirit, but we also rejoice in the fact that our communities of faith are the ones who are responding to God's Spirit.

In an attempt to visually aid us in this understanding, I coordinated an art installation for the Sunday of Pentecost. As an extension of the Prayers of the People, everyone from the church was invited to participate in this project. During fellowship hour after our weekly worship gathering, there was paper and writing utensils on each of the tables in the fellowship hall. People were instructed to write down prayers on these red and white colored pieces of paper. Following this, I provided instructions on how to fold the paper into a very simple origami bird. Since some of our older members and younger children were unable to successfully create the origami shape, youth from the church met together to form the prayer requests into the origami shape.

After hundreds of papers had been filled out, I suspended the origami birds in the sanctuary from the catwalk as a symbol of God's gifting of the Holy Spirit and the community's prayers rising heavenward. The installation was named "Rising Prayers, Falling Grace".

After the season of Pentecost was over and the installation was taken down, there was a further honoring of these prayers. A handful of people from the church took the folded birds outside of the building on the church grounds for a burning ceremony, which functioned as another symbol of our prayers rising like incense (see Psalm 141:2).

Pictured to the right is a portion of the installation taken from the catwalk of the church. Blessings to you all in your ministries and may God's Spirit guide you along this journey.



Your chapter officers are here to serve you by developing events to better equip you for worship arts ministry. We are always looking for more people to join our coordinating team, which conducts its business in quarterly 1 1/2 hour conference calls. Please contact one of the following people if you have questions, suggestions, or would like to get involved:

Chair: Doug Grogan  
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### Convocation Scholarships

The IGRC Chapter of *The Fellowship* offers \$200 scholarships to first-time attenders of a national event who are members of *The Fellowship*. If you are a first-time attender or know someone in the chapter who is attending for the first time, please let Doug Grogan know ([dgrogan@fumcpeoria.org](mailto:dgrogan@fumcpeoria.org)). The chapter board will make scholarship decisions at their next meeting.

Sponsored by The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, in collaboration with Discipleship Ministries, **Awaken 2017 will be held July 24-27 in Little Rock** and will focus on how we as worship designers and leaders must be attuned to the injustices that continue to exist in our world. The event is inspired by the 60th anniversary of the Little Rock Nine and will include a special presentation at Philander Smith College. Worship services will be held at Quapaw Quarter UMC, St. James UMC, Wesley Chapel, and First UMC, with morning prayer at Christ Episcopal.

The event is open to all pastors, musicians, and worship artists. Learn more about the event at [awaken2017.wordpress.com/IGRC](http://awaken2017.wordpress.com/IGRC) and get additional information about a special registration offer available only to Illinois Great Rivers Conference members.